

# Independent

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## PM Shahbaz demands immediate action on UN report on Palestinian humanitarian crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday urged the international community to take immediate action on the recent UN report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) highlighting the forced displacement of Palestinians and food insecurity among children.

The report serves as fresh evidence of Israel's crimes against Palestinians, with the UN revealing that not a single day passes without the bloodshed of innocent Palestinians. The report also notes that Israeli forces are targeting Palestinian children, with a clear intent to eradicate the Palestinian population, the prime minister said.

It has been 322 days since the genocide of Palestinians began, PM Shehbaz Sharif said adding that the forced evacuation of 250,000 Palestinians from their homes in August was a challenge to international institutions, international conscience, and international law.

Furthermore, he highlighted that the pace of Israeli oppression could be gauged from the unjust eviction of 146 Palestinians from their homes in just two days.

"The report of the United Nations agency confirms that on the one hand, the genocide of Palestinians with deadly weapons continues, on the other hand, hunger is being used as a weapon."

The prime minister said only one percent of children in Northern Gaza while six percent of children in the southern part of the city were getting food.

Israel has accelerated the massacre of common Palestinians by pouring fire and explosives from the air, land, and sea, he said.

"If the Israeli state, which commits crimes against humanity, is not brought to justice, the international institutions themselves will be brought to justice."

The prime minister highlighted that the reports of international organizations were a serious indictment against Israel, the murderers of humanity should be punished and the oppressed should be protected.

He reaffirmed his commitment that Pakistan would speed up the delivery of food to Palestinians, especially children.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari along with Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has reached the residence of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman's house in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Electronic Procurement, e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System/e-PADS.

### Condemns bomb blast in Pishin: Terrorism to be fully eliminated with support of general public & security forces: CM Bugti

Independent Report

QUETTA: While strongly condemning the blast in Pishin, the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has made pledge to eliminate terrorism fully with the support of people and the security forces.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Saturday, the Chief Minister condemned the incident of blast in Pishin and expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in it.

He said that the miscreant elements want to spoil peace of the province.

The Chief Minister asserted that the morale of our security forces can't be down with such cowardly acts of terrorism.

He said that we would eliminate the menace of terrorism completely with support of the people and security forces.

He said that our security forces personnel have rendered sacrifices of their lives which cannot be forgotten.

He expressed sympathy with the bereaved families of those died in the blast.

The Chief Minister directed to provide best medical treatment facilities to all injured persons.

It may be mentioned here that three persons including a female and two children were killed and 13 others got injured in the blast occurred in Pishin on Saturday morning.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat enquiring about health of injured of Pishin bomb blast at Trauma Center

### 58 Levies personnel suspended over involvement in drug, Iranian oil smuggling

QUETTA (INP): The Balochistan Home Department has suspended 58 Levies personnel for their alleged involvement in smuggling of drug and Iranian oil.

According to details, the action was part of an ongoing crackdown by provincial authorities aimed at curbing illegal activities in the region.

The Home Department stated that the crackdown targets those engaged in the smuggling of drugs and Iranian oil. The suspensions reflect the government's commitment to addressing corruption and ensuring the integrity of law enforcement agencies.

D.G Levies Balochistan confirmed that investigations have commenced against the sus-

pended personnel, and said any individual found to be involved in smuggling operations will face dismissal from service.

This move underscores the department's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and illegal activities within its ranks. It also highlights broader effort to strengthen oversight and accountability among law enforcement officials, aiming to restore public trust and combat organized crime in the region.

Last month, Pakistan Army spokesperson said billions of rupees are used in oil smuggling every day, and more than 1,000 tonnes of drugs have been seized since September. DG ISPR said controlling such illegal activities will improve economy.

### Governor stresses need to demonstrate unity for foiling nefarious designs of terrorists

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed deep grief over the loss of precious lives in the incidents of terrorism in Pishin and Noshki.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Saturday, the Governor stressed that we have to demonstrate national unity and consensus for foiling the nefarious designs of terrorists and anti-state elements.

He directed to the concerned authorities to provide medical treatment facilities to the injured persons.

He also prayed for the departed souls of those died in the terrorism acts besides praying for the early recovery of the injured persons.

### Contracts with Chinese power producers need to be reviewed: Awais

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Power Awais Leghari said there was a need to revise the contracts with Chinese independent power producers regarding coal sourcing and power debt repaying need to be reviewed.

Pakistan has asked China to switch the coal-fired power projects to local fuel and reschedule the \$15 billion debt owed by Pakistan to Chinese IPPs. The steps aim at creating financial breathing room for Pakistan can secure much-needed bailout package of around \$7 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Last month, the power minister had visited Beijing to discuss the conversion of the Chinese IPP to local fuel. He had said it would not only benefit the Chinese power producers but also help Pakistan saving much-needed forex reserves.

In an interview with Voice of America, Leghari said: "I think the terms and conditions that we already have with the Chinese as far as their IPPs [independent power producers] are concerned, they need another look".

He said the government was taking measures to introduce transparent procedures for all types of government purchases.

The prime minister expressed anger over delay in

### Zardari, Fazal discuss potential key legislation ahead of joint sitting

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday held an important meeting with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman amid reports that the government was planning to summon joint session of parliament on August 28.

The president along with Minister for Interior Senator Mohsin Naqvi arrived at Fazl's residence in the federal capital.

The meeting was also attended by JUI-F leaders including Maulana Abdul Ghafoor, Maulana Asad Mehmood, Aslam Ghauri and Engineer Ziaur Rehman.

Both leaders held detailed deliberation on potential key legislation likely to be tabled in the joint sitting.

During the meeting,

Zardari also gifted a gun to Maulana Fazl.

The meeting came two days after PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to deliberate on the ongoing political situation and discuss potential key legislation.

Sources said that the coalition government led by PM Shehbaz took the PPP leadership into confidence on the "important legislation".

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and JUI-F had reached a consensus on cooperation in the National Assembly and the Senate.

The consensus was reached following PTI leaders' meeting with Fazl at the latter's residence a day earlier.

During the meeting,

### President, PM strongly condemn 3 killed, policemen among 13 injured in Pishin blast

Independent Report

PISHIN: Two children and a woman were killed on Saturday while two policemen were among 13 people injured when a blast occurred at a main market near Surkhab Chowk in Pishin district, hospital officials said.

The incident is the latest in a string of attacks on police officials and checkpoints, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Attacks escalated after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.

According to a list of the casualties issued by Dr Wakeel Sherani, the medical superintendent at Pishin

Civil Hospital, two children were killed in today's blast while 14 were initially injured.

Thirteen of the wounded were referred to the Quetta Trauma Centre, where a woman succumbed to her injuries, a list issued by the hospital's managing director Dr Arbab Kamran showed.

Five injured people were in serious condition, two had minor injuries, the treatment of three was under way and two had been discharged from the Trauma Centre, the list stated.

According to Pishin City Station House Officer (SHO) Mujibur Rehman, the two injured policemen were in critical condition.

"Apparently, the explosive material was planted in a motorcycle,"

SHO Rehman said, adding that as a result, three vehicles were damaged.

The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and the Bomb Disposal Squad have reached the incident site to collect evidence for a probe, the official said.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday strongly condemned the blast in Pishin resulting in the martyrdom of innocent children.

In a message, he expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of the young children and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

The president reaffirmed his resolve to combat terrorism.

Continued on page 2

### PTI fostering disruptive politics: Attaullah Tatar

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tatar has strongly criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its founder, accusing them of fostering politics of disruption in the country.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, he referred to the PTI as "Tehreek-e-Intehar" (Disruption Party), alleging that the party had engaged in activities detrimental to national interests.

"The Tehreek-e-

society and incited people against one another, leading to internal conflicts within the party itself.

The minister also touched upon internal strife within the PTI, mentioning that the party was now engulfed in internal divisions. He alleged that Aleema Khan, sister of the PTI founder, had informed Rauf Hassan that Bushra Bibi, the wife of the PTI founder, was spreading false news.

"Bushra Bibi is spreading a false narrative for sympathy," Tatar quoted



Intehar has consistently propagated against our national institutions and has never hesitated to damage the country's interests," said Tatar. He claimed that the PTI's founder divided

Aleema as saying. He also highlighted the existence of various factions within the PTI, claiming that disinformation cells were actively operating within the party.

### Mir Ali Madad Jatak condemns terrorists targeting innocent people for nefarious designs

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Ali Madad Jatak has strongly condemned the incidents of terrorism in Pishin and Noshki.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Saturday, the Provincial Minister said that neither the terrorists have any religion nor they fall in humanity.

Rather, they are just burden on the land, he

added. Mir Ali Madad Jatak said that the terrorists are targeting the innocent people just for their nefarious designs, therefore, they don't deserve any relaxation.

The Minister said that anti-state elements don't want development and prosperity of the country. This is why they are wasting innocent and precious lives while working on the enemy country agenda.



QUETTA: A view of damaged vehicles after a blast occurred at a main market near Surkhab Chowk Pishin District.

### PM directs for third party validation of development projects worth over Rs 2 bn

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the relevant authorities to conduct third party validation of all the development projects worth of over Rs 2 billion.

Chairing a review meeting regarding Electronic Procurement, e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System/e-PADS at the PM House, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure third party validation to make the grievances and concerns redressal system effective in relation to the procurement process.

The grievance redressal system with respect to procurement process should not be under the procuring agency, he said. He also directed measures for amendments in the rules and regulations in this regard.

He said the government was taking measures to introduce transparent procedures for all types of government purchases.

The prime minister expressed anger over delay in

implementation of the project and also showed concerns over its quality. He also ordered to complete the project within a month.

In the meeting, the prime minister was also briefed on e-procurement. He was told that the e-procurement project was launched by Public Procurement Regulatory Authority in 2017 with World Bank funding worth USD 45 million.

The prime minister was informed that e-procurement had been implemented in 37 ministries and 301 procuring agencies of the federal government.

PPRA has so far trained some 8,988 officials of procuring agencies.

Furthermore, it was told that federal government's e-procurement volume was about Rs 1551 billion.

MoUs have also been signed with the governments of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir regarding e-procurement, the meeting was informed.

### Rind condemns incidents of terrorism in Pishin & Noshki

Independent Report

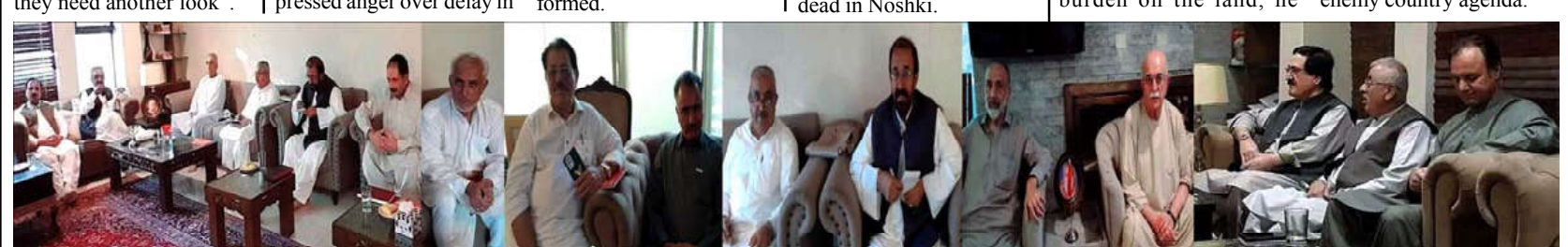
QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has condemned the incidents of terrorism occurred in Pishin and Noshki.

In an official statement issued here on Saturday, the spokesman expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives in the incidents of terrorism.

He said that the anti-social and anti-state elements don't deserve any relaxation and clemency.

The spokesman of provincial government said that the terrorist elements are targeting the innocent persons for their nefarious designs, he spokesman said that the Health department has been issued directives for providing best medical treatment facilities to the persons injured in Pishin blast.

It may be mentioned here that at least two children were killed while over a dozen people including some police cops got injured in the blast occurred in Pishin. While in Noshki, some unknown armed men shot a person dead in Noshki.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pashtoonkha Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmood Khan Achakzai presiding over 1st day of Central Executives meeting



DUBAI: Consul General of Pakistan in Dubai, Hussain Muhammad, witnesses an MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan Association Dubai (PAD) and Ulearn LLC at PAD.

## Petrol, diesel prices expected to drop by Rs5-6 per litre for third fortnight

ISLAMABAD (INP): For the third consecutive fortnight, the prices of major petroleum products like petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) are expected to decrease by around Rs 5-6 per litre.

The prices of oil have decreased by \$2 to \$2.30 per barrel in the international market in the last fortnight. Factoring in the exchange rate and existing tax rates, the prices of both petrol and HSD are projected to come down by Rs 5 to 5.50 per litre.

The average price of petrol in the international market has dropped to around \$80.40 per barrel from about \$82.50 per barrel previously. Similarly, HSD prices have declined to about \$88 per barrel from \$90.30.

During the current fortnight, the import premium on petrol has decreased by about 50 cents per barrel to \$8.50, while the premium on HSD remained unchanged at \$5 per barrel. Additionally, the local currency has gained 25 cents against the US dollar in the last two weeks.

Currently, the ex-depot price of petrol stands at Rs 260.96 per litre, and HSD is at Rs266.07 per litre. In the previous pricing review on August 14, the government had reduced the prices of petrol and HSD by Rs8.47 and Rs6.70 per litre, respectively.

Over the last two fortnights, the total reduction in petrol and HSD prices amounted to Rs14.64 and Rs17.56 per litre, respectively, including the decrease of Rs 6.17 and Rs 10.86 per litre on July 31.

Before that, the prices of both petrol and HSD had increased by Rs17.44 and Rs15.74 per litre, respectively, in the first fortnight of July. Between May 1 and June 15, the prices of petrol and HSD were reduced by about Rs35 and Rs22 per litre.

## Ayaz Sadiq takes action against Parliament staff involved in political activities

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has taken notice regarding Parliament House employees' involvement in political activities.

According to sources, Speaker Sadiq has issued a show-cause notice to Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Sajjad Ahmad Khan, while giving a final warning to four other employees.

Additionally, a charge sheet has been issued to Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Sajjad Ahmad Khan.

Sources from Parliament House revealed that Sajjad Ahmad Khan had been involved in sending people from people from his area to a political protest.

Khan was assigned to duties in Opposition Leader Umar Ayub's chamber. He continued to bring people to the protest, even after being instructed not to.

The sources also mentioned that the other four employees, who were assigned duties with former Speaker Asad Qaiser, participated in the protest despite their official positions.

The National Assembly spokesperson confirmed that final warning notices have been issued to the four employees, and the charge sheet for Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms has been validated.

## Mohsin Naqvi condemns blast near police lines in Pishin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the blast near Police Lines in Pishin and expressed sorrow over the incident in which two children lost their lives.

He also extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the swift recovery of the injured police personnel and other individuals. He said that those who target innocent children do not deserve to be called humans.

He reiterated the resolve that this war against terrorists and their facilitators will continue until their elimination.

He added that it is a war for the survival of Pakistan and to provide a peaceful and secure Pakistan to future generations.

He further emphasized that the nation and security forces stand shoulder to shoulder in this war.

## Youth need to know their constitutional, human rights: SHRC Chairman

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has underscored the critical importance of equipping youth with knowledge about both their fundamental and human rights.

Speaking at a training workshop organized by the Civil Society Support Program (CSSP) at a local hotel, Chairman SHRC, Iqbal Ahmed Detho emphasized that such awareness sessions were essential for young people to become well-informed and engaged citizens. He spoke about global religious issues, particularly in the context of minorities and indigenous people and provided insights on how those issues were modelled worldwide.

Detho highlighted the progress made by the Sindh Government about the Hindu Child Marriages Act commending the government's efforts in advancing legal protections of minorities. The chairman also discussed the structure of the Constitution, including the framework for local government and the legislative powers of the federal and provincial governments.

He described the youth as a vital national asset and said as per the Sindh Youth Policy, 2018, young people needed to be aware of their economic, social and political rights. He maintained that the Sindh Human Rights Policy was a testament to the Commission's dedicated efforts.

He provided detailed information on laws designed to prevent child marriages, violence against children and women and sexual abuse.

Abdul Wahid Sangrasi from the Civil Society Support Program outlined the program's primary objective.

## Shikhar Dhawan retires from international, domestic cricket

NEW DELHI (INP): Indian opening batter Shikhar Dhawan bid farewell to international and domestic cricket on Saturday. He served his country for 14 years.

In a video message shared on his social media accounts, the 38-year-old cricketer said: "I only had one dream and that was to play for India and I even achieved that."

"I am leaving with peace in my heart that I played so long for India. I've told myself don't feel sad that you won't play for India anymore, but feel happy that you played for the country."

Shikhar Dhawan made his debut in 2010 against Australia in Visakhapatnam and amassed over 10,000 runs in international cricket. His impressive career includes 24 centuries — 17 in one-day internationals and seven in Tests.

Shikhar Dhawan savours his century on debut, India v Australia, 3rd Test, Mohali, 3rd day, March 16, 2013. His best came in the 50-over format in which he amassed 6793 runs at an average of 44.11. He averaged 40.61 for his 2315 Test runs.

Dhawan was also a part of the national squad which won the ICC Champions Trophy in 2013 under MS Dhoni's captaincy. Dhawan's career hit the high notes in 2013 as he made 1162 runs in 26 ODIs at an average of 50.52 and a strike rate of 97.89.

## Bangladesh dominate first Test match's proceedings

RAWALPINDI (APP): Mushfiqur Rahim became only the second Bangladesh batter after Mohammad Ashraful (190) to be dismissed in the 190s as Pakistan were left chasing the first Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Mushfiqur, who started the fourth day's play at his overnight score of 55 in Bangladesh's 316 for five while replying to Pakistan's 448 for six declared, was dismissed after scoring 191 in Bangladesh's 565, their third highest total outside home.

When play ended on the penultimate day, Pakistan, trailing by 117 runs on the first innings, were 23 for one after 45 minutes of batting with Abdullah Shafique (12) and captain Shan Masood (nine) at the crease. Saim Ayub (one) was the batter to be dismissed.

Mushfiqur, who featured in the first four-day match for Bangladesh 'A' against Pakistan Shaheens, took full advantage of a DRS reprieve when he was on 59 with the scoreboard showing Bangladesh as 324 for six was eventually caught at the wicket off fast bowler Mohammad Ali who ended with figures of two for 88. Mushfiqur occupied the crease for eight hours and 42 minutes during which he received 341 deliveries of which 22 were converted into fours and one into six.

When Mushfiqur reached three figures off 200 balls with 12 fours, he completed his 11th Test century, making him the second most successful Bangladesh batter after Mominul Haque (12).

The diminutive 37-year-old, in association with 26-year-old Mehidy Hasan Miraz, broke the 48-year-old record when the duo put on 196 runs for the seventh wicket — highest against Pakistan to date, eclipsing the 186 runs partnership between Warren Lees and Sir Richard Hadlee in Karachi in 1976.

Mehidy, who was dropped on 52 and 59, was the ninth batter out after scoring a 179-ball 77 with six fours. He fell to Shaheen Shah Afridi, who celebrated the birth of his first child by finishing with figures of two for 88 off 30 overs.

Pakistan had started the fourth day's proceedings promisingly when Naseem Shah dismissed Litton Das to make Bangladesh 332 for six. Litton, who was 52 overnight, managed to add only four runs to his score.

But then Pakistan had to wait for another 56 overs before finding another success.

After Mushfiqur was the seventh batter to be dismissed, Hasan Mahmud lasted 18 balls for his naught

before falling to Shaheen. He was followed by Mehidy and the innings was finally wrapped up when Shoriful Islam's breezy 14-ball 22 was ended by Naseem.

Naseem turned out to be the most successful of the four-pace attack with figures of 27.3-6-93-3, while Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Ali and Khuram Shahzad picked up two wickets apiece.

Salman Ali Agha turned down 41 overs and remained wicketless, but he will consider himself unlucky as two catches were dropped off his bowling.

Mohammad Rizwan, who scored 171 not out with the bat in Pakistan's 448 for six declared, accounted for four batters behind the stumps, but was also guilty of dropping Mehidy when 52.

Scores in brief (day 4 of 5):

Pakistan (1st innings) 448-6d (Mohammad Rizwan 171 not out, Saud Shakeel 141, Saim Ayub 56, Shaheen Shah Afridi 29 not out, Hasan Mahmud 2-70, Shoriful Islam 2-77).

Bangladesh (1st innings) 565 all-out, 167.3 overs (Mushfiqur Rahim 191, Shadman Islam 93, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 77, Litton Das 56, Mominul Haque 50; Naseem Shah 3-93, Shaheen Shah Afridi 2-88, Mohammad Ali 2-88, Khuram Shahzad 2-90)



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates after scoring a half-century during the fourth day of the 1st Test Cricket Match playing between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Pindi Cricket Stadium

## Afridi celebrates wicket with cradle gesture

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan's star fast bowler, Shaheen Afridi celebrated the birth of his baby boy with a heartwarming cradle gesture after taking a wicket in the ongoing first Test against Bangladesh at Pindi Cricket Stadium Rawalpindi on Saturday.

He bowled a length delivery on middle and leg, which Hasan Mahmud tried to hit over the mid-wicket area, but only managed to edge the ball to hand a diving catch to Muhammad Rizwan behind the wickets.

He celebrated the wicket with a cradling gesture to honour his newborn child. Earlier, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in a press release said that Afridi was blessed with a baby boy. Congratulations from Pakistan team players, management, and PCB, the PCB said in a felicitation message.

Afridi will leave for Karachi after playing the ongoing first Test. He will rejoin the team before the second Test, scheduled to be played from August 30 to September 3 at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

## Pooran shines as West Indies beat South Africa in first T20I

BARBADOS (INP): Nicholas Pooran smashed an unbeaten 65 from 26 balls as the West Indies defeated an experimental South Africa side by seven wickets in their T20 international at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium.

West Indies put the visitors in to bat, in the first of the three-match series, and made a strong start with the bowl.

The Caribbean side limited South Africa to 42-5 from the opening eight overs, with seamer Matthew Forde picking up the wickets of Ryan Rickelton (4) and skipper Aiden Markram (14).

But Tristan Stubbs led the fightback with a superb 76 from 42 balls including three sixes.

Stubbs was well supported by Patrick Kruger who struck 44 from 32 balls as South Africa recovered to 174-7 from their 20 overs.

The game had been delayed for over an hour by heavy rain but as the game went on conditions for batting improved and the home side took full advantage.

West Indies went on the attack from the outset with the opening pair of Alick Athanaze (40) and Shai Hope (51) putting on 84 from the opening wicket before Athanaze was removed in the eighth over, caught by keeper Markram off Otneil Baartman.

Pooran then took the game away from the Proteas with a brilliant display of power hitting, including smashing Burger for four sixes in a row in the 12th over.

Although South Africa gave themselves some chance with the removal of Hope and skipper Rovman Powell (7) the outcome was never in doubt as the home side passed the target with 13 balls to spare.

## Devotees throng Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) shrine on first day of 981st Urs

LAHORE (APP): A large number of people thronged Data Ganj Bakhsh shrine on Saturday, the first day of its annual urs celebrations.

The 981st urs of Hazrat Abu-al'asan Ali bin Usman Al-Hajveri (RA) started with laying of a multicolored chador on grave of the saint. A large number of devotees visited the shrine for prayers and needs, while pilgrims would also arrange for 'langar' [free food] and distribution of free milk. The urs celebrations would continue for three days, from August 24 to August 26.

The Auqaf Department has been allocated Rs 13.5 million for making arrangements of 'langar' for visitors and for other events. The Auqaf secretary briefed the media regarding the urs arrangements here. Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar inaugurated the urs celebrations on Saturday.

The secretary said special security arrangements included installation of 144 security and closed-circuit cameras, establishment of a separate control room, 18 LCD's will also be installed by the police department for the protection of pilgrims.



NASEERABAD: Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Kakar being briefed by SDO Amanullah Gajani about crack in Rabi canal

## ICC considering \$15 million lifeline to revive Test cricket

Sports Desk  
DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is set to establish a multi-million dollar fund aimed at preserving the future of Test cricket.

This move comes in response to the growing financial allure of T20 franchise leagues, which has been pulling talent away from the longest format of the game.

According to British media reports, the ICC is considering dedicating at least \$15 million to support Test cricket. The fund aims to increase match fees for Test players and counter the migration of talent to lucrative T20 leagues.

The initiative, proposed by Cricket Australia, has garnered strong support from BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, a leading contender for the next ICC Chair, as well as backing from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

The proposed fund will help raise the minimum match fee for Test players and cover expenses for overseas tours, particularly aiding cricket boards like the West Indies, which struggle to compete with the financial incentives offered in global T20 tournaments.

The fund is expected to ensure that Test players receive up to \$10,000 per match, making it financially viable for struggling nations to continue participating in

## 3 killed, policemen among...

Continued from page 1  
tinue the fight against terrorism, directing the relevant authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant high ranks to the martyred children in Jannah and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with patience.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned the blast near police lines in Pishin district of Balochistan province.

In a message, the prime minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of young children's lives in the blast and sympathized with the bereaved family members.

Praying for swift recovery of the police personnel who sustained injuries in the blast, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure provision of the best possible medical care to them.

He also directed the authorities to identify and bring the perpetrators to justice, ensuring they receive exemplary punishment.

He said the coward terrorists were not worthy of being called humans, for targeting innocent children.

The prime minister reaffirmed his commitment to continuing the fight against terrorism until uprooting of the menace.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Deputy Director, Agriculture (On Farm Water Management) Mastung, invites sealed Tender/Bid for execution of various development schemes under the following project of PSDP 2024-25 under CSR-2023 from interested contractors/firm with the Bid Security @ 2% of estimated cost/offered rate in shape of Call Deposit (Refundable). The non-refundable Tender Form Fee Rs.1500/- (for each tender) to be deposited in any National Bank of Pakistan Branch situated in Balochistan Province through Green Bank Challan in a head of account (C03136) (verified by the District Accounts Officer).

**Bid Security 2%**

| # | Name of Works  | Total E/Cost |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | AGRICULTURE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VARIOUS OF WM COMPONENTS IN KILI YADGAR RAISANI KANAK DISTRICT MASTUNG PSDP 2024-25 S.NO. 107 (Z2023.0018) TSE-242508522103 | 24.226 M     |
| 2 | DRILLING & DEVELOPMENT OF BORE, INST. OF SOLAR SYSTEM UNDER THE PROJECT PSDP 2024-25 68 (Z2023.0102). TSE-242508522843   | 14.876 M     |

**Procurements shall be made under BPP Rules 2014. Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turnover of at least 10,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Up to 25 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE06 (Tunneling and underpinning), CE09(ii) (Water Supply), CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works), EE11(i) (Solar). Income Tax Registration certificate is required The bidding firm must submit Income Tax Return of Taxation Year 2023 The Bidding Firm must submit Audit Report / Audit Balance Sheet of FY 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23. The bidding firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. The bidding firm must submit tender fee on green challan. **Method of Procurement:** As per bidding Documents **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security (2%) in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee (Bank's certificate is mandatory) in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be downloaded from BPPRA website. **Bid Validity Period:** 90 days **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication, during office hours of any working day. **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders should be submitted on 11 September, 2024 as per given bid documents. **Tender opening:** The Technical Proposals will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed as given in bid documents. **Stamp Duty:** The successful bidder must submit the Stamp Duty in shape of Judicial Stamp Paper or Special Adhesive Stamps as per policy. **Address:** Office of the Deputy Director Agriculture On Farm Water Management, Mastung **Contact No.** 3333992029

Deputy Director  
Agriculture On Farm Water  
Management Mastung

PRQ No.650/24-08-2024  
www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr.gob @dpr.gob @dgp.balochistan

## Govt invites applications for stipend awards for children of Federal govt employees

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has invited applications for Stipend awards to the Children of Federal Government Employees for the Year 2024-25.

According to the notification issued by the Establishment Division, applications on the prescribed form are invited for Stipend awards to the children of serving, retired, and families of deceased federal government employees studying in various government educational institutions for the financial year 2024-25.

The Children of the employees of Pakistan Post Office, Pak Telecom Company Limited, Pakistan Railways, NADRA, MES, and Autonomous/

semi-autonomous bodies. Banks and Corporations and those paid out of defense estimates are not eligible.

The stipend will be awarded as detailed below, Basic pay scale, BPS 1 to 22, Class of entitlement from 5th class to onward, and cost of from Rs 5 to Rs 10.

Cash awards for the children of federal government employees who have completed Hifz-e-Quran-e-Pak during the year 2023-24 up to the age of 20 years on 31-10-2024 duly certified by the Aqaf department (Distt Khateeb).

Cash awards to the children of federal government employees who have obtained 80% or more marks in the last year's

Board/University's final examination in Matric, F.A., F.Sc.

The prescribed application form along with detailed conditions of eligibility can be obtained from the following regional offices of the staff welfare organization and submitted up to 31-10-2024.

Interested candidates could contact with Chief Welfare offices in five regional offices including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta.

The last date for the receipt of application forms (duly completed in all respects) in the regional offices concerned is 31-10-2024. Incomplete forms and those received after the due date will not be considered.



ISLAMABAD: A Photography Exhibition held to Tribute 77 Years of Pakistan in collaboration with the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Atadjan Movlmov (Ambassador of Turkmenistan), and Studio One in the Federal Capital. Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlmov and others participated in the event.

## Coalition's ambitious goal: Restoring Pakistan's near extinct, Alexandrine parakeet

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the Alexandrine parakeet's song fading into near silence in Pakistan, a powerful new alliance is working tirelessly to restore its vibrant call. In a pioneering move, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly has teamed up with the Pakistan Wildlife Foundation (PWF), Himalayan Wildlife Foundation, WWF-Pakistan, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), and the AJK Wildlife Department to spearhead an ambitious conservation project aimed at revival of the Alexandrine parakeet.

The Alexandrine parakeet, scientifically known as *Psittacula eupatria*, is one of the largest parakeet species in the world, with adults measuring up to 40 centimeters in length. The parakeets are also known for their intelligence and problem-solving abilities, which have been observed in both their wild and captive environments. This intelligence, coupled with their striking appearance, has made them popular pets, further intensifying the pressures of the illegal pet trade.

This vibrant species, crucial for its role in seed dispersal, forest regeneration, and maintaining ecological balance, has seen its numbers plummet due to habitat destruction, poaching, and the illegal wildlife trade. Rapid urbanization and deforestation have eradicated key nesting sites, particularly old trees with cavities essential for breeding. Additionally, the bird's presence in markets across the Middle East has added to its decline, driven by a lucrative exotic pet trade that remains largely unregulated.

In response, the coalition has embarked on several strategic efforts. Restoration projects are underway to plant native tree species, creating vital nesting sites and food sources in areas most affected by habitat loss. The Himalayan Wildlife Foundation has deployed local patrols around Deva Vatala National Park, effectively dismantling illegal poaching networks and arresting offenders.

The Psittacula Breeders Association, led by a prominent breeder, is committed to ethical breeding practices, ensuring adherence to conservation standards and distancing itself from the illegal wildlife trade.

Safwan Shahab Ahmed, a leading conservationist, talking to APP highlighted the need for a targeted approach in Kasur district. He advocates for a concentrated effort involving civil administration, law enforcement, and relevant organizations rather than dispersing resources across multiple regions. This focused strategy aims to plant indigenous trees and combat poaching, promising more significant and sustainable outcomes.

Despite these advances, challenges remain. Inconsistent enforcement of wildlife protection laws, especially in rural areas, continues to undermine conservation efforts. Enhanced collaboration between Pakistan and neighboring countries is crucial to tackle the illegal smuggling of parakeets, which persists as a major issue.

Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, a dedicated advocate for nature conservation, has played a key role in rallying support from crucial law enforcement agencies, including the Pakistan Rangers, the Civil Administration of Kasur, and the Punjab Wildlife Department.

## Redressal of public grievances top priority, says DIG Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Ali Rizvi, the DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority.

He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Senior police officers were also present on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the complaints of the citizens

offices in the given time frame. He further said that strict action will be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted in this regard.

He emphasized that Islamabad Police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens. "Such interaction would be continued in future to provide maximum relief to the citizens," he added.

He said that interaction during "Khuli Kachehri" would help to promote friendly policing and will also ensure self-accountability, immediate



and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. He also directed them to send reports to his

resolution of citizens' problems. The protection of life, property and self-respect of citizens comes first, he maintained.

## IU notice for eviction of students: IHC directs IU administration to decide the matter as per rules

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while referring the matter to administration of International Islamic University (IIU) on the petition filed against notice for eviction of hostel from students has directed to decide the matter as per rules.

The court remarked according to counsel for the petitioner students have not done anything on the basis of which hostel be got vacated from them.

As per counsel the students have assured to

maintain discipline in the hostel.

According to counsel for IIU the decision of eviction of hostel from students has been made by the administration. The court cannot interfere in the decision of university administration.

It has been said in the written decision it is not right of students to reside in hostel provided by university. University administration should ensure that study process for students is not disrupted due to eviction of hostel.

## Over 3,000 security personnel to guard Chehlum procession

ISLAMABAD: According to the details the Islamabad Police will ensure foolproof security arrangements for the Chehlum procession of Imam Hussain (AS), a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police have developed a comprehensive security plan for the Chehlum procession and have deployed over 3,000 police officers in this regard.

The formal approval of this plan was given by IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi after a thorough review, and all divisions of the Islamabad Police have also been directed to ensure

complete coordination for the success of this plan.

All concerned officers were instructed to maintain close liaison with peace committees and procession organizers. He mentioned that the cooperation of organizers facilitated collaboration with the police and law enforcement officials during the procession.

Arrangements for thoroughly checking participants of the procession using metal detectors have been made, while strict vigilance is maintained to ensure that security measures are in place by both the police and peace committees. Pakistan Rangers officials will also assist the Islamabad Police in ensuring elaborate security arrangements.



ISLAMABAD: Children enjoying bath in the rain water pond in a hot humid day in the city.

## CDA chairman reviews progress on Islamabad Expressway Project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa conducted an early morning visit to the Islamabad Expressway project on Saturday to review the construction work. Accompanied by CDA member engineering and other officers, he inspected the ongoing work on covering, the railway, and Bhandar bridges.

During the visit, Chairman Randhawa was briefed by Frontier Works Organization (FWO) officials at his camp office, where he was assured that the project would be completed by September 30, despite minor delays caused by monsoon rains. The chairman was informed that over 98% of the work has been completed, with the Cockbridge already opened for traffic and structural work on other bridges finished.

Chairman Randhawa directed that horticulture work on the expressway should be carried out simultaneously to enhance its aesthetic appeal. He emphasized the importance of completing the project, stating that it would significantly improve traffic flow in the city.

Secretary Information Amreen Jan said she was deeply saddened to hear the news of the death of Aamir Ilyas Rana's mother as it was great tragedy for him. Both Secretary Information and PIO said they shared the grief of the bereaved family.

## Gilani flays blast near police lines in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani on Saturday strongly condemned the blast near the police lines in the Pishin district of Balochistan.

Expressing deep sorrow over the tragic loss of young children's lives in the explosion, Gilani extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, said a news release.

The chairman said that the terrorists behind the attack aimed to disrupt the development process in Balochistan, terming them as enemies of humanity.

## Ayaz condemns blast near police lines in Pishin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Saturday strongly condemned the blast near the police lines in Pishin, which tragically claimed three lives, including those of two young children.

He expressed deep sorrow and extended his heartfelt condolences to the victims' families, said a news release.

The Speaker prayed for the swift recovery of the injured, including police officers, and urged that they receive the best possible medical care.

## Salik arrives in Cairo for int'l moot on Islamic affairs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Saturday arrived in Cairo on a five-day official visit to participate in the 35th International Conference of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.

The conference, organized by the Egyptian Ministry of Endowments, is centered around the theme "The Role of Women in Building Awareness."



ISLAMABAD: A demonstration being held outside the Karachi Press Club under the Human Rights Council of Pakistan in favor of giving justice to those killed in a car collision.

## Powerful surprise' awaits India in Kashmir, wani warns ahead of polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): A prominent Kashmiri leader Ataf Hussain Wani Saturday condemned the Indian government's attempts to alter Kashmir's religious and cultural identity, warning of severe consequences and a "powerful surprise" in the upcoming Kashmir elections, amidst growing concerns that the region's identity is under threat.

In an exclusive interview with PTV News, Ataf Hussain Wani rejected India's announcement to hold elections in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), terming it a "desperate attempt" to deceive the international community. Wani emphasized that such moves would not legitimize India's occupation of the disputed region and stressed that the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination would continue unabated.

Wani's condemnation of the Indian government's actions is the latest in a growing chorus of dissent from Kashmiri leaders, who accuse the government of pursuing a systematic agenda to change the demographic makeup of the region. "The Indian government's actions have been widely criticized by human rights groups and international organizations, who warn of the potential for further instability in the region," he added.

## Educational inequality: A key barrier to Pakistan's future ambitions

ISLAMABAD (APP): As dawn breaks across Pakistan, millions of children awaken with dreams of a brighter future. Yet, for many, the chasm between their aspirations and reality remains daunting, shaped by inherent educational inequalities.

Despite education being universally recognized as a fundamental human right, Pakistan's educational system is deeply marred by disparities related to gender, socioeconomic status, geography, and religion.

In Pakistan, access to quality education is often a privilege determined by wealth and location. Urban centers enjoy modern facilities and ample resources, while rural areas struggle with dilapidated infrastructure and a lack of qualified teachers.

The statistics are stark: with 26.2 million children out of school, Pakistan ranks second globally for the highest number of out-of-school children. Punjab, with 11.73 million out-of-

school children, and Balochistan, where 65% of children are not in school, starkly illustrate this regional divide. Gender inequality further adds to these disparities. In conservative communities, girls frequently face obstacles to higher education, stunting their potential and impeding national progress.

Professor Ramzan, an educationist with extensive experience at Saudi Arabian universities, underscores the severity of the economic divide: "In Pakistan, children from affluent families access elite private schools equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, while those from less privileged backgrounds are confined to underfunded public schools. This discrepancy perpetuates a cycle where the wealthy benefit from more opportunities, while the poor remain trapped in poverty."

Comparing Pakistan's educational system to its South Asian neighbors reveals a glaring disparity.

Countries like Sri Lanka and Nepal have achieved notable educational outcomes through sustained investment in infrastructure and teacher training. Sri Lanka's high literacy rate and Nepal's targeted community-based reforms provide valuable models. India and Bhutan have made impressive strides by focusing on holistic development and equitable resource distribution.

In contrast, Pakistan faces significant educational disparities, lower literacy rates, and uneven resource allocation, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive reforms. Personal stories highlight the stark contrasts in educational experiences. Miss Hajra from Rawalpindi opted for a private school for her daughter due to its safer learning environment, regular parent-teacher meetings, and smaller class sizes.

Similarly, Miss Sarah from Islamabad also chose private schooling for its superior education quality and infrastructure, aiming

for her children's better future.

In stark contrast, Mr. Azhar from Islamabad's rural Kirpa Town faces severe challenges. "There are no quality private schools in our region, and my limited resources make it impossible to enroll my children elsewhere. We have had to settle for a government school, despite its shortcomings. The financial strain of moving to the city for better opportunities is beyond our means. I wish there were more equitable options available locally."

Professor Ramzan advocates for several crucial policy reforms to address these educational disparities. He suggests a fair distribution of educational resources to improve rural and underfunded schools, including upgrading facilities and enhancing teacher training. He emphasizes the need for investments in curriculum development and teacher training to elevate educational standards nationwide. Expanding finan-

cial aid programs can help low-income families afford education and reduce economic barriers.

Additionally, implementing gender-sensitive policies, providing safe transportation, and offering scholarships for girls are essential to overcoming barriers to female education.

Discussing the recent initiative to implement a single national curriculum, Professor Ramzan suggested re-evaluation to remove flaws in it. He recommends a more significant allocation of the National Budget towards enhancing educational facilities and expanding teacher training programs, akin to the efforts of Door-been, a non-profit organization dedicated to this cause.

Educational inequality in Pakistan is a multifaceted issue requiring immediate, focused intervention. Addressing the root causes through targeted policies and community engagement can help build a more inclusive education system.



ISLAMABAD: Elected representatives of municipalities under Jamaat-Islami Karachi are protesting in front of the KMC head office against the deterioration of the Provincial Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Authorities seal off process routes on the occasion of Jaloos e Chehlum of Imam Hussain RA in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
Sunday August 25, 2024

**Katcha ambush**

The riverine katcha region straddling Punjab and Sindh is back in the news after reports emerged of criminals attacking two police vehicles in the Machka area on Thursday.

At the time of writing, at least 12 policemen were confirmed to have been martyred. Whenever such disturbing incidents occur, the country's attention is shifted to the katcha belt. Yet soon after, as other events start dominating the news cycle, these backwaters are forgotten until the next atrocity.

As per reports one of the police vehicles was ambushed near a field and the law enforcers were attacked by dacoits armed with rockets. Sources told this paper that criminal gangs had warned of revenge after the police killed one of their accomplices a few weeks ago.

On Friday, Punjab Police claimed the main culprit involved in the attack had been neutralised, while several suspects had been injured. The Punjab police chief had announced a 'historic' operation in the aftermath of the tragedy.

The dacoit problem in Sindh and Punjab's riverine areas goes back decades, and several 'grand' operations have been launched, with some — in the early 1990s, as well as 2016 — involving the military. Yet the criminals seem to bounce back every time, indicating that the state's approach is flawed.

Moreover, the katcha dacoits have made a business out of kidnapping-for-ransom, as well as 'honeytraps', luring victims from across the country. It must be questioned how criminal gangs are able to procure military-grade weapons. As per reports, the dacoits have been known to possess RPGs and even anti-aircraft guns. How is this heavy weaponry making its way to remote areas that lack even basic facilities? Besides, why does every anti-dacoit operation fail to bear results? Where the outlaws of the katcha belt go, we seem to be moving in circles.

Whether it is religiously inspired militants, separatist militias or the heavily armed bandits of the katcha region, the state must go after all violent elements instead of crushing 'digital terrorists' and other straw men. Interprovincial coordination between the Sindh and Punjab administrations is essential to end the bandit raj, with intelligence input from the security agencies.

Moreover, it needs to be ascertained whether the outlaws have sympathisers within the ranks of LEAs or powerful local patrons. If such links are established, these elements also need to face the law. The fact is that bandits living in 19<sup>th</sup>-century conditions are able to take on the state with 21<sup>st</sup>-century weapons, and the administration only fumbles for responses when there is a high-profile incident such as the Machka tragedy.

Also, the state should bring education, healthcare and jobs to the katcha belt, as poverty and lack of opportunities push locals to join the ranks of the dacoits.

**Tariq Khosa**

There comes a time in the life of nations when citizens start to feel that the social contract between them and the state is on the verge of collapse. What holds them together is the national purpose, postulated through constitutional frameworks and based on the rule of law, justice and equity.

I feel very despondent and disappointed after a recent visit to Balochistan where the state seems to have lost its narrative of national cohesion due to the follies of those who wield actual power in the province. The sense of despair is so palpable that one starts to lose hope in a peaceful and prosperous future for this land of great promise.

As a police officer, I served in Balochistan for almost five years as superintendent/ senior superintendent in the early 1980s, and as inspector general in 2007. Both tenures were under the military eras of Gen Ziaul Haq and Gen Pervez Musharraf. In fact, Balochistan has mostly been under direct or indirect, but overt, military rule. The early 1980s wit-

nessed the post-1970s Bhutto-era counter-insurgency development phase as well as the post-1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The gun culture prevailed. The state was fully involved in promoting jihad as an instrument of proxy war between the US and Soviet Union.

Every other day in Quetta, there were bomb blasts and acts of sabotage against state institutions. The police bore the brunt as the front-line law-enforcement agency. My nights were spent on city roads trying to enhance police vigilance against saboteurs and some criminal elements amongst the Afghan refugees. New colonies like Pashtunabad were established by refugees who could not be confined to camps on the Afghan border areas of Pishin and Quetta districts. Additionally, the theocratic revolution in Iran in 1979 added another law-and-order dimension to the Shia-Sunni sectarian violence — another proxy war at our doorstep.

Such multidimensional challenges were faced by the then-military government through good governance

**Quest for justice**

and the infusion of massive development funds through the state machinery in the shape of the bureaucracy and security services, including the police, FC and army. Gen Rahimuddin was a tough governor and hard taskmaster. He ensured that civil service and police officers were posted on merit.

We served under three outstanding chief secretaries Sheikh Jamil Ahmed, Saleem Abbas Jilani and Savak Rustam Poonegar, and three outstanding IGS Dilshad Najmuddin, Syed Saadat Ali Shah and Kamer Alam. They ensured that the best officers were posted as deputy commissioners/commissioners and district SPs/ DIGs. The cream of the DMG and PSP were called in from Punjab, Sindh and NWFP (KP) and posted to field assignments for top-class service delivery and effective law enforcement.

I spent four years from 1982 to 1985 in Balochistan as additional SP Quetta, SP Sibi (including Kachhi, Dera Bugti, Kohlu and Kahlan) and SSP Quetta. We served with a sense of pride in a province that was recovering after a military operation and po-

litical turmoil. The people and tribal elders gave us respect and we cherished our time spent in remote regions. We were far away from home but never felt unwelcome in the lands of the proud Baloch and Pakhtuns. The lesson we learnt and propagated to those in the corridors of power in Islamabad and Rawalpindi was this: give respect to the Baloch and trust the Pathan; they will never stab you in the back.

Balochistan in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was in the even more severe grip of our military establishment under Musharraf. The West's ill-conceived war on terror resulted in militancy, violence and mayhem, particularly near the Pak-Afghan border, and generally across Pakistan, with Karachi becoming a haven for militant groups.

Balochistan faced another phase of insurgency that intensified with the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti near Kohlu on Aug 26, 2006. Prior to that, the issue of enforced disappearances had created discontent. Dr Allah Nazar, a Baloch student leader from Turbat and a gold medalist from Bolan

state in the Feb 8 national elections. The people of Balochistan are angry at the blatant misuse of authority and corruption by those who conducted the polls. We are witnessing the erosion of the state's writ.

As a patriot, I beseech the power brokers to pay heed to the alarming situation in Balochistan. They must distinguish between the bullet and ballot. They must abandon their barrel-of-gun tunnel vision and open all channels of communication with Balochistan's disgruntled youth. To avoid a total meltdown, immediate course correction is needed. The results of the fraudulent Feb 8 polls must be scrapped, and new fair and free elections held under an impartial ECP. Let power be transferred to the genuine representatives. A caretaker government comprising persons of known integrity and credibility must be set up to ensure good governance and impartiality. Above all, let us stop tinkering with the Constitution and laws. And those in position of authority should neither seek nor be given an extension in their tenures. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Khwaja Ahmad Hosain**

When Imran Khan was the prime minister he tried to stop the vote of no confidence against him through a ruling by the deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. The Supreme Court took suo motu notice. The PML-N and PPP-P also petitioned the Supreme Court.

The court set aside a ruling of the deputy Speaker and also declared unlawful Imran Khan's attempt to dissolve the National Assembly. All of this was done through a short order.

The short order of the court gave detailed directions to the Speaker regarding the holding of the vote of no-confidence. It was criticised at the time by supporters of the PTI as being a case of judicial overreach. How could the court direct an independent constitutional organ like the legislature regarding the manner in which it was to undertake its internal affairs? Ultimately, the short order was implemented. The detailed reasons came much later. Mr Imran Khan was removed. We went back to Purana Pakistan.

The five-member bench of the court that gave this decision was headed by chief justice Umar Ata Bandial. It also comprised justices Ijazul Ahsan and Munib Akhtar. The decision by a bench which included these three judges paved the way for the removal of the PTI government and for the PDM to take charge. They were hailed by supporters of the PDM and by others as heroes for upholding the Constitution.

For these same supporters, the judicial heroes later became villains. This reflects an unfortunate tendency amongst litigants in our legal landscape. When a judge or court endorses their perspective, they are hailed as brilliant independent jurists. When a decision comes against them, the decision is characterised as unconstitutional or unlawful and aspersions are cast on the character or motives of the judge. What is conspicuously lacking both on the part of the government and litigants generally is a trait which underpins any functioning system: a graceful acceptance of defeat.

Where humans interact, disputes are inevitable.

**The final umpire**

Mechanisms have been evolved for resolution of disputes. In a cricket match, the decision of the umpire is final. If either party refuses to accept the umpire's final call, chaos ensues and there can be no match. Two critical elements of a fair dispute resolution process are that, first, the rules must be clear prior to the start of the game.

Second, the umpire who is to apply these rules should be independent and trusted by both sides. In cricket, it was Imran Khan who was at the forefront of the demand for neutral umpires. In his subsequent political life, he appeared through some of his rhetoric to have developed an antipathy to neutrality in situations where it was essential.

The Constitution sets out the rules that are to apply in the case of the government of our country. Under Article 5, every citizen has a duty to obey the Constitution and the law. Generals, judges and legislators each assume an additional obligation. They swear an oath as prescribed by the Constitution. This oath of office requires them to uphold the Constitu-

tion. Swearing an oath is a solemn act, invoking a divine witness, regarding one's future conduct.

The Constitution establishes courts for the resolution of disputes. The Supreme Court is the apex court. It has the final say. For the constitutional system to function, its orders must be implemented. Litigants do not have the option of refusing to implement court orders on the basis that they view them as unconstitutional or wrong.

The Speaker of the National Assembly, although a constitutional officer with immunity for certain actions, did not have the option in the vote of no confidence case to refuse to implement a court order. Neither did the then prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani when he was required to write to the Swiss authorities in connection with certain bank accounts. In the case of reserved seats, the Election Commission is similarly placed. It must implement the court order. Any other view results in the collapse of the constitutional system.

Two arguments are presented to counter this

perspective. First, it is submitted that parliament is sovereign and the supreme lawmaking body. Therefore, judicial interpretation or review which undermines parliament undermines the will of the people. This view is wrong. The Constitution embodies the will of the people as a historic community and was adopted by the Constituent Assembly which was an assembly elected for this purpose. The Constitution expressly contemplates judicial review of legislation. To this extent, parliament is not sovereign.

As justice Jawwad Khawaja explains in his book, we must rid ourselves of alien concepts like "parliamentary sovereignty" which are not part of our constitutional framework. By enforcing the Constitution and striking down legislation or other unlawful actions on the part of constitutional bodies, the courts are in fact giving effect to the will of the people as embodied in the Constitution.

Second, a contextual argument is presented based on past Supreme Court decisions which have haunted us as a na-

**Simple lessons****Naeem Sadiq**

Imagine a country where 99.9 per cent of the citizens cannot file their complex and convoluted tax returns without hiring the services of tax lawyers. Imagine a country whose railway operates with 315 employees per train but refuses to learn from the Japanese who perform the same task with only 5.9 employees. Imagine a country that is stuck with a burgeoning total fertility rate of 3.6, but will remain oblivious to how Bangladesh reduced its TFR from 6.9 in 1971 to 1.9 in 2024.

Imagine a country whose Supreme Court operates with 833 employees but will not consider how the UK's supreme court works with only 64 on its payroll. Imagine a country that gives 150,000 government vehicles as a bribe to its officials, which no other country does. Imagine a country that gives 60pc of its workers less than the minimum wage and will not ask why Switzerland jailed a multimillionaire for denying minimum wage to a single employee.

If there is one Pakistani who shattered this cycle, looked outwards and learnt to compete with the world's best, it was a boy from a mudbrick home in Mian Channu. The results were outstanding. Most Pakistanis, however, appear to have succumbed to a state of learned helplessness.

So here is a simple, feasible, indigenous proposal. It is to force the prime minister and the entire parliament to spend a week (at their own expense) in the valley of natural beauty and crystal clear rivers, nestled in Pakistan's majestic Karakoram range, called Hunza. There are numerous useful lessons they can learn from Hunza that can be emulated, on a self-help

basis and without begging the IMF for more credit.

The first lesson we can learn is to stop releasing 99.9pc of our entire untreated raw sewage into ponds, lakes, nullahs, rivers and the sea. Hunza treats all its sewage and does not let a drop trickle down to pollute the heavenly Hunza river or the breathtaking Attabad lake. Each set of shops, buildings, homes and villages have their own dual septic tanks, confining the sewage and enabling the sludge to be used as fertiliser.

On the contrary, Karachi's proposed S-III sewage treatment project that began its life with a budget of Rs8 billion in 2007 has already crossed the Rs45bn mark — with nothing to show for it. The existing 'sewerage' thinking, driven by contractual kickbacks, lust for foreign loans and a dysfunctional bureaucracy has accomplished zero sewage treatment in 76 years. We could emulate the Hunza model (and its improved version of constructed wetlands) in every town and village of Pakistan at a negligible cost.

One does not see any obscene double-cabin 'Vigos' with gun-toting goons on the streets of Hunza. Carrying and displaying weapons is prohibited and rigidly enforced, a much-needed lesson for the rest of the country. Every few weeks our provincial governments make phony announcements prohibiting the carrying and display of weapons. Karachi's DHA spent millions on displaying thousands of 'Say no to guns' posters every few hundred yards. But there is never any resolve behind these eyewash measures, resulting in an escalating proliferation of arms and violence. Can we not learn from Hunza?

Karachi deploys about 12,000 contracted sanitation workers to clean the trash that we are

allowed and even encouraged to throw on our streets. These workers receive less than half the legal minimum wage, no EOBI and no social security. Their lives could well be at par, if not worse than those of 16<sup>th</sup>-century slaves. How does Hunza clean its streets? First, littering is prohibited. Second, shops, homes and the adjoining areas are cleaned by the residents themselves. Third, garbage is retained indoors, packed in bags and placed at a designated location in each street, from where it is collected by municipality vans at a fixed hour each day. Thus a sensible government and a motivated citizenry save billions of rupees every month. This self-help system makes Hunza streets cleaner than those in most towns in Pakistan. Can we emulate Hunza's street-cleaning model?

Unlike the 28m out-of-school Pakistani children, every Hunzai child goes to a school. The literacy level is 90pc, a factor that helps in spreading civic and environmental instructions and issues. There is a huge downstream impact clearly manifested in smaller families, cleaner public toilets, orderly queues and courteous policemen.

Huge credit for Hunza's development goes to the Aga Khan Development Network for its thoughtful focus on education, environment, and more recently, soft-ware, digital technology, high-speed internet and solar power plants to replace diesel power generation. Pakistan can begin to learn, emulate and compete with the best in the world — as brilliantly demonstrated by the boy from Mian Channu and the heavenly valley of Hunza. -- Courtesy Dawn

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Concerned about their future, children everywhere have stood up for their rights. An international movement led by children is successfully drawing attention to the climate crisis by approaching judiciaries, media, and governments. They are trying to influence national and international policies by bringing climate justice for children into sharper focus and asking authorities to take urgent climate action.

The widespread and deepening threats to

**Child rights crisis****Jamil Ahmad**

As the planet bakes in the hottest summer ever, with each passing month warmer than the last, the climate crisis is depriving children of some of their basic human rights and reducing opportunities for them to secure and live a decent life. Extreme weather events linked to climate change disproportionately affect children's health and lives. We are facing a child rights crisis, a situation that is already alarming in poor regions that are hit first and worst by climate change.

In addition to the immediate threats, the burden of long-term risks of climate change also falls unfairly on children, as they have to live longer with its adverse consequences.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes that "children aged 10 or younger in the year 2020 are projected to experience a nearly four-fold increase in extreme events under 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming by 2100 and a five-fold increase under 3°C warming. Such increases in exposure would not be experienced by a person aged 55 in the year 2020 in their remaining lifetime under any warming scenario."

Concerned about their future, children everywhere have stood up for their rights. An international movement led by children is successfully drawing attention to the climate crisis by approaching judiciaries, media, and governments. They are trying to influence national and international policies by bringing climate justice for children into sharper focus and asking authorities to take urgent climate action.

The widespread and deepening threats to

children's rights linked to the climate crisis are documented in detail in a 'General Comment' issued last year by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Describing climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss as "urgent examples of global threats to children's rights", it noted that the climate crisis is "a form of structural violence against children and can cause social collapse in communities and families". It called upon states to work together in addressing the effects of climate change on the enjoyment of children's rights.

Nowhere is this structural violence against children more at play than in middle- and low-income countries where millions of children are in harm's way from threats emanating from the multifaceted climate crisis. It is spewing crises in other areas of basic life support — food, water, health, education, and housing — in the developing nations of Africa and Asia where children and young people form the largest segments of the population.

About a quarter of the world's 2.3 billion children live in Asia and the Pacific, with higher concentrations in South and Southeast Asia. Forty per cent of Africa's population is under 15 years. In Pakistan, children make up about 45pc of the fast-growing population. In these regions, the rapid spike in the intensity, scale and duration of heatwaves has turned Earth's surface into an oven, with temperatures crossing 50°C at several points. By Unicef's calculations, the percentage of children exposed to heatwaves globally could climb from the current 25pc to 100pc by 2050.

A quick measure to protect children from in-

tense heatwaves is to reduce their outdoor exposure by closing schools. But this affects education. This year, more than 80m children lost weeks of learning time when schools across Asia and Africa were closed. A World Bank report on the impact of climate change on education showed that students in regions of extreme heat cumulatively lose up to 1.5 years of education by the time they complete Grade 12.

Heatwaves, though, are not the only reason for disrupting education. Wild-fires, floods, or damage to infrastructure also increase risks of learning loss and dropping out when schools are closed in low- and middle-income countries. Unfor-tunately, not all children in these regions are enrolled. Those who remain outside education networks suffer badly.

In South Asia, particularly, air pollution and acute water scarcity expose children to physical and mental health problems. In 2022, 347m, or 55pc of all children in South Asia experienced water scarcity, meaning their regions had inconsistent supplies of water during the year. These issues are impairing children's physical development and retarding their mental growth. Stunting among them is spreading. Systemic risks associated with the climate crisis will grow if timely action is not taken by all. Governments will have to take the lead to frame and implement child-sensitive climate policies and collaborate with partners, national and international, to ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all children. Clearly, it is a question of intergenerational equity. At stake are the hopes and aspirations of millions of young people. -- Courtesy Dawn

## We must find a permanent solution to the issue of Katcha area: Maryam

### CM Punjab visits RY Khan to console families of police martyrs

RAHIM YAR KHAN (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif visited the families of police martyrs of Rahim Yar Khan at the DPO office to share their grief.

The police martyrs included Muhammad Imran, Rashid, Sajid, Ahmed, Zahid, Munir, Nazir Abbas, Ins Sattar, and Abdullah. Among those who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty were three Hindu youths namely Ajay Ram, Bairam

Ram, and Raja Kanwal. CM Maryam Nawaz met the parents, family members, and children of the martyrs. She offered prayers for the martyrs and comforted the grieving families by visiting the relatives of the martyrs one by one. She encouraged the mothers and widows of the martyrs. Maryam also embraced a crying widow. She showed affection to the young children of a martyr.

"There was a lapse,

and we will rectify the mistake. Such incidents will not happen again," stated Maryam Nawaz Sharif. "Every martyr is a hero of the nation; the bereaved families will receive full support," she added. "The children of martyrs will be provided with free education, housing, and employment," Maryam Nawaz Sharif promised. "I have no words to express the sorrow over the martyrdom of police

officers due to the bandits' attack," Maryam Nawaz said. "As soon as I received the news, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif instructed me to visit the grieving families immediately," she mentioned. "Every life is precious; we will also ensure protection of police officers," emphasised Maryam Nawaz. "We must find a permanent solution to the issue of Katcha area. Construction of checkpoints will be completed soon."



BAHAWALPUR: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is addressing the briefing session on the attack on the Police at Rayhim Yar Khan by bandits.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi is called on by Pir of Golra Sharif Syed Qutb ul Haq Gilani and Sajjada Nasheen Pir Junaid ul Haq Gilani at Governor House.

## PTI is now playing the "victimhood card": Azma Bokhari

LAHORE (INP): Information Minister Punjab Azma Bokhari has stated that after the religion and treason cards, PTI is now playing the "victimhood card."

Imran Khan, in his attempts to get out of jail, sometimes seeks forgiveness from the army and at other times appeals to the British Prime Minister. The principal of the "Criminology University of Bani Gala" is now trying to gain public sympathy by portraying himself as a victim. The differences between his sister-in-law and sister have become a topic of discussion in the WhatsApp groups of the "Fitna Party." A power struggle is ongoing between the sister-in-law and the sister for control of PTI.

She expressed these views in response to the

WhatsApp chat between Aleema Khan and Rauf Hassan. She added that "Fitna Party" can go to any lengths to spread chaos in the country. Nothing can be ruled out when it comes to the propaganda by the founder of PTI and Bushra Bibi.

The Information Minister stated that the founder of PTI becomes "Mola Jatt" one week and turns into an "innocent bird" the next. When Imran Khan was Prime Minister, he was preparing lists to hang his opponents.

She further said that today, Imran Khan's own wife and sister are spreading propaganda about executions. While in power, they were planning to wall off their opponents, and now both husband and wife are afraid of even the shadows of the prison walls.

## Murad Ali Shah condemns bomb blast in Pashin

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah has strongly condemned a bomb blast in Police Line Pishin, on Saturday.

The CM Sindh expressed his grief and sorrow over the death of two innocent children. He said that terrorists were a threat to the integrity of the country.

Murad said that at this critical time, we all had to fight the menace of terrorism together. May Allah help us in ending terrorism, he said.

CM Sindh also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. He also sympathised with the families of the deceased.

## Summary for 5 new tehsils in Lahore sent to Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): The summary for creating five new tehsils in Lahore has been sent to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and official approval would be taken from the cabinet.

Official sources told APP that approval for new five tehsils would be taken from the provincial cabinet, and with the establishment of five new tehsils, the total number of Lahore tehsils would reach ten.

The Punjab government has also appointed assistant commissioners for five new tehsils at the disposal of DC Lahore.

After approval of the cabinet, a notification would be issued. The new tehsils include Wagah, Jallu, Shahdara, Niaz Baig and Nishtar Colony.

## Police hold flag march in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): The Sukkur police on Saturday conducted a flag march with the purpose of maintaining peace and tranquility in the district.

The flag march started at the Globe Chowk and culminated at the SSP office after passing through various areas.

SSP Sukkur Amjad Ahmed Shaikh has said that the security has been

## Sharjeel says: BRT Red Line to be completed by 2026

KARACHI (APP): Senior Minister of Transport and Mass Transit Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon on Saturday said that the work on the BRT Red Line project was progressing rapidly and the project would be completed within the stipulated time in 2026 despite the delay made during the caretaker regime.

He said this during his visit to the 26.5 kilometers long Red Line route along with media persons.

Senior Minister viewed the ongoing work on the BRT Red Line project and issued instructions to the relevant officers.

"The BRT Red Line is Pakistan's first biogas-powered project and its vehicles will run on environment-friendly biogas," Sharjeel said.

Sharjeel Memon said that there was a delay of six to eight months in the work on this project during the previous caretaker government, but the elected government of the People's Party has accelerated the pace of work and this project would be completed within the stipulated period.

Sharjeel Memon said there were strict directions from PPP leadership for completing all projects on

given date and time for the convenience of the people.

President Asif Ali Zardari and chairman Bilawal Bhutto wanted these projects to be completed as soon as possible, Sharjeel added.

He said, "All resources are being utilized for the purpose and work was in progress at Red Line project."

"No negligence on the quality of the construction of the project will be tolerated," Memon warned.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the CM Sindh already issued directions for the relocation of underground utility.

Minister further elaborated on the measures being taken, stating that airport authorities have been instructed to conduct rigorous screening of passengers arriving from affected countries to detect any potential cases of monkeypox.

To ensure effective screening, the Institute of Public Health (IPH) has been directed to train master trainers who will then train airport staff and

healthcare workers on identifying symptoms, testing protocols, and infection control measures, he mentioned.

This multi-layered approach aims to prevent the spread of the virus and ensure prompt response in case of any suspected cases, he added.

Salman Rafique also emphasized the crucial role of public awareness in preventing the spread of monkeypox.

He urged citizens to remain vigilant and informed about the virus, its symptoms, and prevention measures.

The government, he said, is launching a comprehensive awareness campaign to educate the public on the risks associated with monkeypox and the steps they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones. By working together, the minister emphasized, we can mitigate the risk of an outbreak and ensure the health and safety of the people of Punjab.

## GoP intensifies Monkeypox prevention measures, airport screening: Minister health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique Saturday revealed that the provincial government has launched a proactive campaign against monkeypox, featuring airport screenings and heightened hospital vigilance to safeguard public health and prevent the virus's spread.

Additionally, nine dedicated centers have been established to enhance the response to the potential outbreak, he said while talking to a private news channel.

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## CM price control task force chairperson visits Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): Chief Minister Price Control Task Force Punjab Chairperson Salma Butt paid visit to Sargodha on Saturday.

She visited several bazaars and markets and reviewed the price control related situation under price control act in the city. Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Muhammad Wasim was also present, and he briefed the chairperson on the current situation.

He said that 52 price control magistrates were working in the district and continuing constant crackdowns on profiteers, hoarders and stockists in the district. He said that price control magistrates

were required in seven Tehsil of the District due to shortage of price control magistrates and 52 magistrates were not enough to for tightening the noose around strong profiteering mafia.

Salma Butt said the Punjab government was working on war footing Basis to establish profiteering free system.

She said that Punjab Government would soon set up Price control enforcement Regularity Authority aimed to expedite capability of Price control magistrates in war against profiteering.

Later, she met industrialists, traders and representatives of karyana store association Sargodha.



HYDERABAD: Slum area submerged in river water near River Indus.

## Network of diabetes clinics launched to offer free subsidized medications

KARACHI (APP): A network of 3,000 diabetes clinics, aimed at providing free consultations to around 75,000 patients daily, has been launched across Pakistan.

This initiative called the National Diabetes Network (NDN), will particularly benefit remote areas where access to standardized medical care is limited. The announcement was made by experts and officials on Saturday. "Today, we have officially launched the National Diabetes Network (NDN) under the Health Promotion Foundation, in collaboration with Meri

Sehat, Pakistan's first AI-enabled healthcare platform, and Getz Pharma," stated Prof. Abdul Basit, Vice Chairman of the Health Promotion Foundation, during the launch at NADEP Footoon-2024. "This network will bring standardized diabetes care to millions across the country," he added. Prof. Basit noted that the experience gained from operating NDN clinics in Karachi has laid the groundwork for expanding to 3,000 locations nationwide. Each clinic will offer free consultations to 25 diabetes patients.

Punjab government has also appointed assistant commissioners for five new tehsils at the disposal of DC Lahore.

After approval of the cabinet, a notification would be issued. The new tehsils include Wagah, Jallu, Shahdara, Niaz Baig and Nishtar Colony.

## Police hold flag march in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): The Sukkur police on Saturday conducted a flag march with the purpose of maintaining peace and tranquility in the district.

The flag march started at the Globe Chowk and culminated at the SSP office after passing through various areas.

SSP Sukkur Amjad Ahmed Shaikh has said that the security has been

## Justice Shujaat regrets to discharge duty in bench due to surgery

LAHORE (Online): Senior most judge of Lahore High Court (LHC) Shujaat Ali Khan has regretted to perform obligations in Rawalpindi bench.

Personal Assistant (PA) of Justice Shujaat Ali Khan has written letter to registrar LHC in this regard.

According to text of the letter Justice Shujaat Ali Khan is ready to discharge judicial obligations on principal seat in Lahore. He cannot discharge duty in Rawalpindi bench due to his surgery.

PA further said in the letter that there is surgery of Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and acting chief justice of LHC has already been informed in this regard. Doctor has prohibited Justice Shujaat Ali Khan from undertaking long journey.

## DG PHATA visits one window operation center

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG) Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) Saif Anwar Jappa here on Saturday visited the One Window Operation Center established in connection with 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' project in Deputy Commissioner Office.

During the visit, Saif Anwar Jappa reviewed all the administrative matters in detail including the facilities being provided to the citizens and also interacted with the people who came to get information about 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' project.

The DG also inquired from the citizens about the facilities being provided at One Window Operation Center.

Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema gave a detailed briefing to Saif Anwar Jappa.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Hassan Tariq and DD North Punjab Benazir Bhutto Income Support Program, Chaudhry Saeed Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

The DG said that the housing project is aimed at addressing the housing needs of low-income families.

Under the initiative, low-income people including workers,

## CEO health sys: Vaccination drive underway in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Health Department Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr Aamir has said vaccination campaign is under way in Bahawalpur district.

According to a press release issued here, he said that deputy commissioner's office and the Health Department Bahawalpur Office were fully engaged for implementation of vaccination drive across the Bahawalpur district.

"The district management and the Health Department have jointly been working to vaccinate children across Bahawalpur district to save them from diseases," he said, adding that teams had been constituted to perform duty to vaccinate children in all tehsils of the district.

He said that the teams of the Health Department would vaccinate children to save them from 12 diseases. He said that people should cooperate with the teams of the health department in this regard.

## Overpopulation: A looming threat to ecological balance in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Highly vulnerable to climate change, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is facing a looming threat of an ecological balance exacerbated by overpopulation, poverty, and unemployment.

As the KP grapples with rapid population growth owing to poverty and unemployment, therefore, its negative impact especially on forest, wildlife, fisheries, environment, agriculture, and ecological balance has become increasingly evident, especially in Kohistan, Chitral, Batagram, Dir, Shangla, and Swat.

This deforestation is predominantly occurring in private and community-owned forests, particularly in KP and Gilgit-Baltistan. The timber mafia's relentless exploitation of

biodiversity, and wildlife is mounting, particularly in KP and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The strain is visible along major roads, such as the GT Road between Tarnab Peshawar and Azakhel Nowshera, where deforestation is rampant. The sight of cut timbers and uprooted tree trunks serves as a stark reminder of the high rate of forest loss.

The 2015 National Forest Policy highlighted that Pakistan's forest cover has dwindled to approximately five percent, with an annual loss of around 27,000 hectares.

This deforestation is predominantly occurring in private and community-owned forests, particularly in KP and Gilgit-Baltistan. The timber mafia's relentless exploitation of

communal lands and privately owned forests further exacerbates the situation.

Similarly, agriculture in KP is suffering due to the rapid melting of glaciers, a consequence of rising temperatures and global warming.

Adversely impacted agriculture yield and quantity of water at outlets due to fast melting of glaciers in Chitral and Swat due to rising temperature, the national forest policy said that deforestation in watershed areas can trigger land degradation, loss of biodiversity and marine life besides making negative effects on wildlife and aquatic resources if solid measures were not taken.

In riparian and coastal areas, especially in KP, Sindh, and Balochistan, deforestation amplifies

floods and facilitates seawater intrusion thus increasing chances of inflicting economic losses to the government kitty as evidenced by the devastating 2010 and 2022 floods. The flood had razed to ground several expensive hotels illegally constructed in the river Swat's beds in 2022.

Gulzar Rehman, former Conservator of Forests KP while comparing the deforestation rate of Pakistan with the world said that every year around 10 million hectares of forest were deforested - equal to the area of Portugal in the world.

Around half of this high deforestation is counterbalanced by the re-growth of forests, which means that overall around five million hectares of

green gold are lost per year in the globe.

Declaring overpopulation, poverty, and unnecessary tree logging are one of the major causes of deforestation in developing countries including Pakistan, he said that Pakistan's population was only 37 million in 1947 soared to a record 223 million in 2022, 241 million in 2023 and if it continued growing with such high pace it is expected to touch 260.3 million in 2030 and 330.8 million by 2050, the resulting vanishing of the green gold, wildlife, and bees population.

In such a grim scenario, he said the challenges of food security would be further aggravated for highly populated countries like Pakistan and people would face hunger and starvation.



LARKANA: A large number of people attend funeral prayers of Martyred Pakistani Pilgrims of Karbala, who died bus-crashed accident in Iran, held in Larkana.

## Rana Tanveer says: Utility stores being restructured to ensure subsidy to right people

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain said on Saturday that utility stores were being restructured to benefit the public in a more effective manner.

Talking to the media after inaugurating the 9th Colour and Chem Exhibition here at Expo Centre, he added that political stability is inevitable for economic development.

Inflation has reduced due to the positive measures of the government, while the tax system is being simplified to restore the confidence of taxpayers and the investors, he mentioned

and cited that during the previous government of the PML-N, the inflation and prices of everything were well in control and the country's economy was in a position of take-off.

He said that government is restructuring the utility store to pass the benefits of subsidy on to the people in a transparent manner, asserting, "we are improving this system as there were complaints that the benefits of the subsidy are not reaching the right people fully, some employees are involved in it and the names of some officers are also in it who were taking the subsidy, so it was necessary to bring reforms, we are trying to

provide the subsidy to the deserving".

Rana Tanveer said that the government was striving to get the country's economy on its feet again, and because of the positive measures taken under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, there has been a clear reduction in inflation in two to three months.

The rate of inflation has come down from 38 to 16 per cent, and the country will soon come out of the difficult situation and prosper again. The federal minister said that the tax system is being simplified to restore the confidence of investors.



HYDERABAD: All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran Sindh President Jawad Qureshi speaking at a press conference at HPC.

## ICCI President urges Govt to act boldly on economic challenges

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has urged the government to take drastic measures to address the country's economic challenges and put it on the path to stability and prosperity. He emphasized that selling valuable assets and obtaining heavy loans are not viable solutions and instead, the government should reduce the tax burden on industries and offer incentives to the business community.

During a meeting with business leaders at the Chamber House on Saturday, Bakhtawari criticized the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for holding the industry and other sectors hostage. He pointed out that the patriotic business community is striving to make Pakistan the fifth-largest economy globally but the IPPs are creating obstacles.

He highlighted the exorbitant electricity prices

in Pakistan, citing that the global average is not more than ten cents, while the country is being sacrificed to benefit a few families. The current electricity prices - 42 rupees for industry, 60 rupees for domestic consumers, and 80 rupees for commercial consumers are unacceptable and intolerable, he said.

He said that we are being intimidated by the threat of international agreements even though none of the IPPs themselves have adhered to their agreements and there is clear evidence of this. He said that more than a hundred industries have been closed while lakhs of workers have become unemployed, but still the government does not understand what the problem is and how to solve it. He said that 2100 billion rupees are being paid to IPPs without generating electricity. If the transmission lines are not laid for the transmission of electricity,

## Farmers urged to get register for Kisan Card

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Deputy Director Agriculture Tahir Mahmood Bhatti urged farmers to get themselves registered for Kisan Card in order to avail facilities being offered by the provincial government across the province.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was paying special attention to welfare and facilitation of farmers. He said the government had introduced the Kisan Card through which farmers would be able to avail none of the IPPs themselves have adhered to their agreements and there is clear evidence of this. He said that more than a hundred industries have been closed while lakhs of workers have become unemployed, but still the government does not understand what the problem is and how to solve it. He said that 2100 billion rupees are being paid to IPPs without generating electricity. If the transmission lines are not laid for the transmission of electricity,

## Utility Stores employees hold protest

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): The local staff of Utility Stores Corporation (USC) held a protest demonstration against proposed closure of the organisation by the federal government.

A large number of employees gathered outside of the press club, chanted slogans to record their protest against the government decision to close down the USC. They said the government decision would render thousands of employees jobless. They warned of starting a movement soon in case the government did not take back its decision.

## Food points fined over hygiene rules violations

LODHAN (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) made inspections of multiple food points in various districts and imposed over Rs 165,000 fine over hygiene rules violations.

The food safety teams made inspection of two beverage plants in Jinnah Colony, Old Shujabad road. One plant was shut down till further improvement after failing sample tests, while the other was fined Rs. 50,000.

Similarly, two bakeries at BCG Chowk, Sher Shah Road, were fined Rs. 25,000 each due to dead insects found in sweets, the absence of workers' medical certificates.



HYDERABAD: All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union Chairman, Abdul Latif Nizami addresses during worker meeting, held at Labour Hall in Hyderabad.

## Pak sesame seed exporters secure major orders in China, set to lead in year 2024 exports

BEIJING (APP): A delegation of 23 sesame seed exporters from Pakistan has successfully secured substantial orders from Chinese companies during their visit to Beijing and Handan City in Hebei Province, China.

The exporters are poised to become the leading suppliers of sesame seeds to China this year, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's export sector.

On August 19, the delegation attended Pakistan China B2B Sesame Conference at Pakistan Embassy in Beijing. The b2b

conference was arranged by Mission and China National Grains Association (CNAGS). The conference was inaugurated by Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi and Vice President of CNAGS, Wang Zhenzhong.

The leader of delegation Hafiz Saad bin Mustafa also spoke at the occasion, CEN reported.

Analyst from SCI Group made a presentation at the conference highlighting demand and supply situation in the Chinese market and related price dynamics. The conference was attended

by 19 top Chinese enterprises interested in importing sesame seeds from Pakistan including, inter-alia, COFCO, Beijing Capital Agribusiness & Foods Group, Jingliang Holdings, Hebei Grain Group and Zhuochuang Consulting Co. Ltd.

During the visit, the delegation also visited Daming County of Handan City, Hebei Province. Daming city consumes 20% of Chinese sesame imports of China and currently imports over 200,000 MT of sesame seeds per annum whereas Chinese imports for the whole year.

## Railways plan to procure 230 passenger coaches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is all set to procure 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) aiming help to improve the speed of the trains and ensure adherence to fixed timings.

"Out of the total, around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CUBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h," said an official in the Ministry of Railways.

He said Pakistan Railways is putting

maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work on the railway track along with improving the speed of the locomotives to carry passengers to their respective destinations on time. The infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I), and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped, he added.

The official noted that the length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project.

## Gold rates up by Rs.1,700 per tola to Rs.263,700

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs. 1,700 and was sold at Rs.263,700 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.262,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,457 to Rs. 226,080 from Rs. 224,623 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.207,240 from Rs.205,904, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,950 and Rs.2,529.14, respectively.



ISLAMABAD: A view of activities at I-II Fruit and Vegetable Sabzi Mandi in the Federal Capital.

## Awareness session on actuarial profession organized by SECP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in collaboration with the Society of Actuaries (SOA) US, organized an awareness session with an aim to enhance knowledge of its employees.

The SOA, one of the largest global actuarial bodies, educates, develops, and regulates over 60,000 members worldwide. Actuarial professionals were pivotal in assessing, measuring, and mitigating financial risks and uncertainties, both short-term and long-term.

The SOA's Regional

Director for the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, Mr. Zain Ibrahim delivered an in-depth presentation to SECP officers.

He highlighted the diverse roles actuaries play across various sectors, including (re)insurance, pensions and retirement planning, health and care, investments, banking, risk management, government and regulatory bodies, data science, climate risk, and sustainability. He also detailed the pathways to SOA accreditation and the current technical certification programs available.

## 12 illegal mini petrol pumps sealed

BUREWALA (APP): The district administration sealed 12 illegal mini petrol pumps during a special crackdown launched at Burewala on Saturday.

In line with special directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Syed Asif Hussain Shah, Assistant Commissioner Burewala Farooq Ahmed, accompanied by Civil Defence Officer Rehan Kareem, and other officers of municipal corporation, launched a crackdown on illegal petrol pumps.

The team sealed 12 illegal mini petrol pumps and took the material into custody, while fine of Rs 130,000 has also been imposed on the pump.

## Mobile service center brings vehicle registration, key services to Shalimar ground

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Excise Department is launching a mobile service at Shalimar Cricket ground in the federal capital as part of the ICT Doorstep initiative.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the department staff would be available in the ground's parking lot to assist

residents with important civic tasks from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

People living nearby could visit the ground to access various services through a dedicated van. This mobile unit would simplify the process of obtaining fuel permits for both domestic and commercial use and make motor vehicle registration

easier. The goal was to provide these services quickly and efficiently.

The mobile service would also help with vehicle-related tasks such as registration, transfer, and token tax payments.

In addition, it would offer services like issuing domicile certificates, birth certificates, power of attorney documents.

## Alfalsh asset management secures CCP approval for strengthening market position

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval for the acquisition of management rights of certain funds of M/s. Alfalah Asset Management Limited by M/s. Alfalah Asset Management Limited.

This approval follows the execution of a Transfer of Management Rights Agreement between the two entities, said a press release issued.

Alfalsh Asset Management Limited, a public unlisted company, is a prominent Asset Management Company (AMC) and investment advisor. The company operates under a license issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in accordance with the Non-Banking Finance Companies (Establishment and Regulation) Rules, 2003.

Similarly, Faysal Asset Management Limited, also a public unlisted company, functions as an AMC and

investment advisor under the regulatory framework of the SECP.

Under the terms of the Agreement, Alfalah Asset Management Limited will acquire the management rights of certain funds currently under the management of Faysal Asset Management Limited. The CCP, in its assessment, identified the relevant product market as 'Asset Management Services' and noted the horizontal nature of the transaction due to the overlap in operations between the two entities.

Following the completion of the transaction, the market share of Alfalah Asset Management Limited is anticipated to experience a slight increase, while the market share of Faysal Asset Management Limited will correspondingly decrease. Crucially, the CCP's analysis has determined that this acquisition will not lead to market dominance by Alfalah Asset Management Limited in the relevant market.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displays apples along the roadside to attract the customers.

## Role of private sector important for development of agri sector: Iftikhar

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo has said that the role of the private sector is very important for the development of the agricultural sector.

He said this while presiding over the meeting at Agriculture House.

The private sector and Agriculture department should work together for the development of the sector, he said. Iftikhar Ali directed

to formulate a committee which would also include representatives of the private sector to prepare a draft for regulation of micronutrients. He further said that the process of registration and regulation of micro nutrients was being made very transparent.

He made it clear that there would be no compromise on the quality and standard of micronutrients.

## Boost remittances, foreign reserves top priority: ED SBP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director of the State Bank of Pakistan, Syed Sohail Jawad, said on Saturday that the government intends to integrate overseas Pakistanis into the national system.

Talking on PTV news, he mentioned that overseas Pakistanis faced problems related to sending money to families living in Pakistan, as it was a very expensive and time-consuming process.

The State Bank of Pakistan launched the Roshan Digital Account

scheme under the National Payment Strategy designed to help those overseas Pakistanis with remittance-related issues, he added.

He stated that the government is committed to addressing remittance-related issues to boost the confidence of overseas Pakistanis, as these remittances account for approximately 8 to 9 percent of the economy.

To solve this problem, a Raast payment system based on international standards was adopted, he added.



HYDERABAD: Vendors sell vegetables to earn their livelihood as the customers are not willing to buy vegetable due to price hike, at New Vegetable Market in Hyderabad.

## PPP South Punjab asks govt to revisit decision of closing down USC

MULTAN (APP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) South Punjab called upon the government to immediately reverse proposed decision to close down Utility Stores Corporation (USC).

In a statement issued here on Saturday, Senior Vice President PPP South Punjab Khawaja Rizwan Alam and Chief Coordinator Abdul Qadir Shaheen stated that the government had taken the decision in haste, which would severely affect those earning less than Rs 40,000 a month.

The poor could buy subsidised flour, cooking oil, sugar, rice, lentils, etc, at lower prices from the USC compared to the open market, and it was currently providing direct subsidies to 26 million families. Shutting it down would badly affect the poor and render thousands of USC employees jobless.

They said the USC was established by the founder of the PPP, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, in 1971, and it had been providing relief to people during the past five decades.

## Gaza talks resume in Cairo as suffering worsens under Israeli campaign

### Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Gaza ceasefire and hostage negotiators discussed new compromise proposals in Cairo on Saturday, seeking to bridge gaps between Israel and Hamas as the U.N. reported worsening humanitarian conditions, with malnutrition soaring and polio discovered.

Israeli military strikes in Gaza killed 50 people on Saturday, Palestinian health authorities said. Victims of hostilities over the past 48 hours remain lying on roads where fighting continues or trapped under rubble, the authorities said.

A Hamas delegation arrived on Saturday to be nearer at hand to review any proposals that emerge in the main talks between Israel and the mediating countries Egypt, Qatar and the United States, two Egyptian security sources said.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani was expected to attend.

Months of on-off talks have so far failed to produce a breakthrough to end Israel's devastating military campaign in Gaza or free the remaining hostages seized by Hamas in the militant group's Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

The Egyptian sources said the new proposals include compromises on outstanding points such as how to secure key areas and the return of people to north Gaza.

However there was no sign of any breakthrough on key sticking points, including Israel's insistence that it must retain control of the so-called Philadelphia Corridor, on the border between

Gaza and Egypt.

Hamas has accused Israel of going back on things it had previously agreed to in the talks, which Israel denies. The group says the United States is not mediating in good faith.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been shuttling from Jerusalem to Cairo to Doha, pressing mediators and representatives of Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire deal that would pause fighting in Gaza and bring Israeli captives home.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has locked horns with Israeli ceasefire negotiators over whether Israeli troops must remain all along the border between Gaza and Egypt, a person with knowledge of the talks said.



A boy sits on boxes as Palestinians gather to receive aid, including food supplies provided by World Food Program (WFP), outside a United Nations distribution center, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip.

## Israeli strikes on Lebanon kill six fighters, one child, security sources say

### Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Israeli airstrikes across southern Lebanon on Friday (Aug 23) killed at least six fighters and one child, according to security sources, as armed group Hezbollah responded with artillery rounds and rockets across the border.

The Israeli military has been trading fire with Iran-backed Hezbollah across Lebanon's southern border in parallel with

the Gaza war, with hostilities ramping up recently amid fears that a full-scale regional war could erupt.

Israeli strikes on the southern Lebanese towns of Mays al-Jabal and Tayr Harfa on Friday killed four Hezbollah fighters, according to the party's death notices and a security source.

Another fighter was killed in a separate strike outside Aitarun, according to the security source.

## Border corridor becomes sticking point in Gaza truce talks

### Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: A narrow stretch of land along the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt has emerged as the main stumbling block in negotiations for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants his country to permanently control the Philadelphia—or Salaheddin—Corridor, which it seized during the war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack.

It was built by the Israeli military when Gaza was under its direct occupation between 1967 and 2005, and has become a key target in Israel's current offensive against Hamas.

As Israeli negotiators hold talks in Cairo on a potential Gaza truce and hostage release deal, the Philadelphia Corridor has become the primary sticking point. Netanyahu contends that Israeli control is necessary "in order to prevent Hamas from rearming itself", a statement from his office said on Thursday. Hamas, which is not attending the latest round of talks in Egypt, demands a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. A high-ranking Egyptian official this week similarly called for a "complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Philadelphia Corridor."

## Russia, Ukraine swap 115 prisoners each

### Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Russia and Ukraine exchanged 115 prisoners of war from each side on Saturday after the United Arab Emirates acted as an intermediary.

It is the first such exchange since Ukraine launched a surprise attack into Russia's Kursk region on Aug. 6, the biggest attack inside Russian territory by a foreign power since World War Two.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the Russian servicemen swapped were captured in the Kursk region.

All released Russian soldiers are now in Belarus and will receive medical treatment and rehabilitation upon their return to Russia.

The ministry expressed gratitude for the UAE's role in facilitating the prisoner swap.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a picture with Ukrainian POWs wrapped in the country's blue and yellow flags and hugging each other. He said that the returned were servicemen from the border guards, the national guard, navy and the armed forces.

Zelenskyy expressed gratitude to the Ukrainian troops who helped replenish the pool of prisoners for exchange.

Kyiv has said it has carved out a buffer zone in an area that Russia, which sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, has used to pound targets in Ukraine.

According to Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine's commissioner for human rights, 82 of the returned Ukrainians defended the port of Mariupol in 2022.

## Harris summons Americans to reject political divisions and warns of consequences posed by a Trump win

### Monitoring Desk

CHICAGO: Kamala Harris summoned Americans on Thursday to reject political division and instead chart what she called a "new way forward," as she accepted her party's nomination while blending biography with warnings about electing Donald Trump again to the White House.

Taking the stage to a thunderous standing ovation as she closed out the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, the vice president argued that her personal story and background as a prosecutor made her uniquely qualified to protect Americans' interests against a former president she cast as only having his own interests in mind.

"Our nation with this election has a precious, fleet-

ing opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past," Harris said. "A chance to chart a new way forward. Not as members of any one party or faction, but as Americans." The daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, Harris became the first Black woman and person of South Asian descent to accept a major party's presidential nomination and she would become the first female president if elected. Harris did not explicitly reference the historic firsts she would set in her 40-minute speech, and she only mentioned the words "Democrat" or "Republican" in the context of discussing a bipartisan border bill that Trump helped secure earlier this year, which she promised to sign into law if elected.

## US expands area in Mexico to apply for border asylum appointments, hoping to slow push north

### Monitoring Desk

CIUDAD HIDALGO: As soon as she stepped onto Mexican soil this week, Venezuelan migrant Yuri Carolina Meléndez downloaded the U.S. government's app to apply for asylum appointments.

The CBP One app has been around, but as of Friday migrants in Mexico's southernmost states bordering Guatemala will be able to apply for appointments. Previously, they had to be in central or northern Mexico.

"I have to wait to see if it really works," the woman said while resting under a tree with her 16- and 18-year-old daughters along a border highway leading to the city of Tapachula this week.

Mexico has been asking the U.S. to expand the app's access to the south in an attempt to relieve the pressure migrants feel to continue north to at least Mexico City. In recent years, the Mexican government has tried to contain migrants in the south farther from the U.S. border,

but the lack of work opportunities and housing in southern cities like Tapachula have pushed migrants north.

Mexico hopes that if migrants can wait for their appointments in the south they might not risk getting snatched by authorities without papers or by organized crime groups that prey on migrants travelling north. With an appointment, they could, in theory, move without interference.

US ambassador to Mexico calls proposed judicial overhaul a democracy "risk" and economic threat

Germin Alemán, a 31-year-old from Honduras travelling with his wife and three children, planned to register as soon as they reached Tapachula. "We're going to apply here, we're going to wait for the appointment," he said as they walked from the border toward Tapachula.

Others, however, still felt the pressure to get farther north. Many migrants often carry big debts and need to start paying them off as soon as possible.

## South Asia floods leave nearly 300,000 Bangladeshis in emergency shelters

### Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Nearly 300,000 Bangladeshis were taking refuge in emergency shelters Saturday from floods that inundated vast areas of the low-lying South Asian country, disaster officials said.

The floods were triggered by heavy monsoon rains and have killed at least 42 people in Bangladesh and India since the start of the week, many in landslides.

"My house is completely inundated," Lufton Nahar, 60, told AFP from a relief shelter in Feni, one of the worst-hit districts near the border with India's Tripura state.

"Water is flowing above our roof. My brother brought us here by boat. If he hadn't, we would have died."

The nation of 170 million people is crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers and has seen frequent floods in recent decades. Monsoon rains cause widespread destruction every year but climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events.

lines were damaged between the capital Dhaka and the main port city of Chittagong, making access to badly flooded districts difficult and disrupting business activity.

The flooding also comes just weeks after a student-led revolution toppled its government.

Among the worst affected areas is Cox's Bazar, a district home to around 1m Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar.

Tripura state disaster agency official Sarat Kumad Das told AFP that 24 people had been killed on the Indian side of the border since Monday.

Another 18 had been killed in Bangladesh, according to disaster management ministry secretary Md Kamrul Hasan.

"285,000 people are living in emergency shelters," he said, adding that 4.5m people in total had been affected.

When the floods hit, Bangladesh was recovering from weeks of civil unrest that culminated in the August 5 toppling of autocratic ex-leader Sheikh Hasina.



Chief of the public prosecutor's office of Termini Imerese, Ambrogio Cartosio holds a press conference to share details about the investigation regarding the luxury yacht that sank during a violent storm, at the court in Termini Imerese, near Palermo, Italy.

## Israel's evacuation orders have displaced 90% of Gaza residents, UN says

### Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Successive Israeli evacuation orders in Gaza, including 12 just in August, have displaced 90% of its 2.1 million residents since the Israel-Hamas war began in October, the top U.N. humanitarian official for the Palestinian territory says.

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris says she and President Joe Biden are working to end the war in Gaza, where the International Rescue Committee says the polio virus has been circulating for the first time in a quarter-century because of the destruction of hospitals and water infrastructure, along with overcrowded living conditions. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Office says a delegation

from the country has arrived in Cairo to resume efforts to salvage a cease-fire deal. The talks are being mediated by the United States, Egypt and Qatar. A crucial sticking point involves Israel's demand for lasting control over two strategic corridors in Gaza.

The war began on Oct. 7, when Hamas and other militants stormed Israel, killed around 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted around 250. About 110 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead. The Israeli offensive launched in response has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the local Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many were militants or civilians.

## 3 dead, several wounded in knife attack on German festival

### Monitoring Desk

SOLINGEN: Three people were killed and four severely wounded in a knife attack at a festival in the western German city of Solingen on Friday, according to a spokeswoman for the police in nearby Duesseldorf.

Police have launched a "major operation" to find the suspect, who is on the run, the spokeswoman said, adding that a "wide area" had been cordoned off.

There was a large police presence at the scene including special forces and a helicopter, according to an AFP photographer. The attacker had "stabbed people indiscriminately with a knife," the Bild daily reported.

The festival was part of a series of events to celebrate the city's 650th birthday. In a statement posted online, Tim-Oliver Kurzbach, the mayor of Solingen, said the whole city was in "shock, horror and great grief".

## Inmates kill three guards in Russia prison siege

### Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Inmates killed three Russian prison guards in a siege on Friday, officials said, with the assailants having apparent connections to the militant Islamic State (IS) group.

Russian special forces stormed the facility in the southern Volgograd region and shot dead all four attackers after an hours-long stand-off.

It was the second such case of IS-affiliated prisoners taking staff hostage since June and comes with ethnic tensions running high following the attack on a Moscow concert hall in March.

"Four criminals took eight colony employees and four convicts hostage," Russia's federal penitentiary service said Friday.

## Explosion outside synagogue in southern France injures police officer

### Monitoring Desk

PARIS: Two cars set on fire outside a synagogue in southern France on Saturday caused an explosion in which a police officer was injured, authorities said.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin called the incident at the Beth Yaacov synagogue in the seaside resort of La Motte "an obviously criminal act".

He said, "All means are being deployed to find the perpetrator". Darmanin said police protection of synagogues and Jewish schools and shops would be strengthened

across France. William Maury, of the police union Alliance Police Nationale, told BFM TV that the injured police officer's life was not in danger.

Police confirmed the attempted arson but declined to give more details.

Darmanin and Prime Minister Gabriel Attal were to travel to the site of the explosion on Saturday.

Police were hunting for a suspect and the anti-terrorism prosecutor's office was put in charge of the investigation, Attal said.



Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) gather after a swap, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, at an unknown location in Ukraine.

## Ukraine says it used US glide bombs in Russia's Kursk region and has retaken some land in Kharkiv

### Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukraine's military says it used high-precision glide bombs provided by the United States to carry out strikes in Russia's Kursk region while also claiming to have recaptured some territory in the eastern region of Kharkiv, where Russia launched an offensive in the spring.

Ukraine's Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleschuk issued a video Thursday night purporting to show a Russian

platoon base being hit in the Kursk region. He said the attack with GBU-39 bombs resulted in Russian casualties and the destruction of equipment.

The video showed multiple explosions and plumes of smoke rising at the site.

Separately, Ukraine's 3rd Separate Assault Brigade said its forces advanced nearly two square kilometers (about three-quarters of a square mile) in the Kharkiv region.

## Indian desert school's unique design offers respite from heat

### Monitoring Desk

JAISALMER: In the sweltering heat of the Thar desert, where summer highs soar above 50 degrees Celsius, an architecturally striking school is an oasis of cool thanks to a combination of age-old techniques and modern design.

The Rajkumari Ratnavati girls' school uses the same yellow sandstone as the 12th-century fort in nearby Jaisalmer, in India's Rajasthan state, dubbed the "golden city" due to the colour of the rock.

Like the fort, the school has thick rubble walls that help bounce back the heat, while the interior is plastered with lime, a porous material that regu-

lates humidity and aids natural cooling. Unlike the ancient fort, its roof is lined with solar panels, which provide all the school's power in an area with frequent electricity cuts.

Temperatures inside the school, designed by US-based architect Diana Kellogg and built by local artisans — many of them parents of pupils — can be as much as 20 per cent lower than those outside. "I love going to the school," said eight-year-old Khushboo Kumari, one of the 170 students. "The air feels as if it is coming from an AC." The school's classrooms are arranged around an open elliptical courtyard resembling a Roman coliseum.



A vehicle carrying a boat and rescue workers move through flood waters in Feni, southeastern Bangladesh.

## Report reveals major concerns about Pakistan's education system

ISLAMABAD (INP): The latest official report from Pakistan's Planning Commission has revealed a concerning state of the country's education system. The District Education Performance Index Report 2023 showed that all 134 districts in Pakistan, except for the capital Islamabad, are lagging behind on critical education indicators.

These range from poor learning outcomes for students to inadequate public financing for education.

The report highlighted that a human resource crisis in Pakistan, where many young people are entering the job market with little to no education. This crisis is seen as even more severe than the economic challenges the country faces.

The report found some regional disparities in education performance. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province outperformed Punjab in terms of education governance and management. However, Punjab was ahead in building education infrastructure. These differing priorities reflect the focus areas of the political parties in power - the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N).

The District Education Performance Index Report 2023 was launched jointly by the United King-

dom High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, and Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal.

The report painted a bleak picture of Pakistan's education system, with the entire country's map appearing "red" in terms of poor learning outcomes and inadequate public financing for education.

None of Pakistan's 134 districts were found to be high-performing in education. All districts, except Islamabad, were categorized as either "medium" or "low" performers, signifying significant gaps and struggles in their education delivery systems.

The key issues identified include poor governance, extremely poor learning outcomes for students, and insufficient budget allocation for education.

The average score of 53.46 across all districts indicates a severely dysfunctional education system that requires urgent attention and interventions to address the fundamental gaps.

The "medium" scoring districts in the report are facing significant gaps in their education systems, leading to compromised outputs. These districts require serious attention and interventions to improve their education service delivery. The report also revealed that a staggering 80% of out-of-school children in Pakistan have never even enrolled in school. Additionally,

parents have a strong perception of poor quality in the public education system.

According to Rafiullah Kakar, a member of the Planning Commission's Social Sector, the "learning domain index" paints a very dire picture, with the entire country appearing "red" on this indicator. He highlighted that the share of education budgets in provincial development budgets is highly inadequate, with up to 90% of current education budgets going towards paying salaries rather than improving learning outcomes.

The national average score in the District Education Performance Index is 53.46, placing Pakistan firmly in the "low performance" category for its education system.

The assessment was based on five key indicators, with "infrastructure and access" scoring the highest at 58.95, suggesting some progress has been made in expanding educational opportunities, although significant gaps remain.

According to the report, the second-highest scoring domain after infrastructure and access is "Inclusion (Equity & Technology)". This suggests some progress has been made in expanding educational opportunities and access, particularly through the use of technology.



LAHORE: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen offering Dua after inaugurating expansion project of Shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA).

## War against security and security agencies of country is red line: Ishaq Dar

LAHORE (Online): Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has said war against security and security agencies of Pakistan is red line and there is no room for crossing the red line.

"Law is making its course. Whatever happens will come before all. Terrorism cannot be allowed to any one in the name of estrangement, he said this while talking to media men here Saturday.

Need is there that we should all work together for betterment, prosperity and progress of Pakistan, he added.

All the four provinces, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are like bouquet Pakistan is destined to lead all the 57 Muslim countries, he remarked.

Pakistan has now become missile power after becoming nuclear power on May 28, 1999. Had there been no political instability in the court it would have become economic power. In coming days it has to become economic power.

There is storm of inflation in the country. It is facing price hike. However it will again be put on the

path to development and prosperity under leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif.

The government is striving to put it on path to economic development. This is result of these efforts that Pakistan inflation rate has now reduced from 38 percent to 11 percent.

Terrorism was eliminated from this country. Loadshedding also came to end during Nawaz Sharif era. Now terrorism has again raised its head in the country. Terrorists will be eliminated.

## Jonathan Lalley says: US govt spent \$100mn to address malnutrition out of \$215m for flood relief

ISLAMABAD (APP): US Mission Pakistan Spokesperson, Jonathan Lalley on Saturday said that out of over \$215 million the United States provided for flood relief and recovery, nearly \$100 million has gone toward addressing malnutrition in the 2022 floods' impacted areas of Pakistan.

In a video message here, the US Mission Pakistan Spokesperson said that Pakistan's 2022 floods have devastated the lives of millions of Pakistanis.

"Women and children were hit especially hard. Even today, millions of Pakistani children are at risk of dying from malnutrition. We partnered with the World Food Program to provide emergency food and nutrition," Jonathan Lalley said.

With UNICEF, he said the Mission treated nearly 135,000 malnourished children, provided pre-natal care to some 74,000 pregnant women, and offered essential health care services.

Moreover, with the World Health Organization, the Mission established 12 nutrition stabilization centers across Balochistan and Sindh to provide essential health services, he added.

"Just this month, U.S. Ambassador Blome delivered an additional 486 tons of ready-to-use therapeutic food to treat an additional 39,000 children," he said.

With that donation, he said the United States has delivered emergency therapeutic food to more than 317,000 Pakistani mothers and children and enabled 779,000 front-line healthcare workers to provide nutrition counseling to parents and caregivers to prevent malnutrition in the first place.

"The United States will continue to work urgently with Pakistan to address the malnutrition crisis.

Because every Pakistani child deserves the opportunity to grow up, to be healthy and strong, and to reach their full potential," he reiterated.



QUETTA: On the directives of Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Hamza Shafiqat Chief Officer MCQ Attaullah Bazai visiting city in connection with Chehelum route and cleanliness

## Gobspokesman, ACS Home, DC inquire about health of blast injured at Trauma Center

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Army successfully rescued seven mountaineers in Gilgit Baltistan from a height of 20,100 feet.

The climbers, who have been rescued in the operation, included three Russians and four Pakistanis. These mountaineers were in trouble due to high altitude sickness. On the rescue request, Pakistan Army acted promptly and climbers were rescued safely by Army helicopters.

The mountaineers have thanked Pakistan Army for the help.

ment to the injured.

It may be mentioned here that three persons were dead and 13 others injured in the explosion took place in Pishin.

Meanwhile, the Additional Chief Secretary Home, Shahab Ali Shah also visited the Trauma Center to inquire about the health of injured persons.

The Commissioner Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat briefed him about the medical facilities and treatment being extended to the injured.

The ACS Home expressed satisfaction over the medical facilities provided to the injured. He directed to the concerned authorities not to leave any stone unturned in the treatment of injured.

He also vowed to continue war against the terrorists and their facilitators.

## Provincial Minister PHE grieved over loss of lives in Pishin's blast

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has expressed grief and sorrow over the blast in Pishin.

In an official statement issued here on Saturday, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran said that he is grieved over the human and property losses caused due to the explosion in Noshki.

The Minister asserted that the elements involved

in the terrorism attack would be taken to task.

He said that it was a very cowardly act to down the morale and resolve of the people.

He said that the anti-state elements are afraid of that the routine life is going to be normal.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran prayed for the departed souls of children besides for early recovery of the injured persons of the blast.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing Mehmood Ali flanked by Mama Qadeer talking to media persons.

## AJK government announces free monthly supply of 200 electricity units to mosques

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah said that the state government has approved the supply of free electricity of up to 200 units in mosques across the state to realize the dream of an Islamic welfare state.

While quoting the official notification issued by the Department of Religious Affairs, he said in a statement late Friday that the government will pay up to 200 units per month for all the mosques in Azad Kashmir that have electricity meters installed and are working. The government will install solar panels in

mosques across Azad Kashmir in a phased manner, he added. Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah further said that the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Ch. Anwarul Haq has decided to make the Azad region a welfare state in the true sense. He said that it is not only a historic move but a clear example of love and attachment to Islam.

He said that despite the severe financial crisis, with the support of the federal government, the provision of cheap flour to the people and the allocation of serious funds for projects like social protection for the orphans, widows,



ISLAMABAD: Nawab of Bahawalpur, Nawab Salah-ud-Din Ahmed Abbas, along with his son, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## BISP enhances financial support to alleviate economic hardships for poor families: Rubina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Saturday said that the BISP is providing additional financial support to alleviate the economic difficulties of poor families. She stated that the program reflects the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to economically empower the women of Pakistan, a vision she championed even during her exile in Dubai.

Thanks to this program, the most vulnerable women in the country have gained recognition and support, she said.

Senator Rubina Khalid expressed these views during her speech at the women's Khuli Katcheri in Azakhil Bala, Nowshera, said a news release.

Senator Rubina Khalid urged the women to visit the BISP offices to collect their payments only after receiving a confirmation message from 8171.

She highlighted the importance of having essential documents such as the Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) issued by NADRA and the Form B for children to enroll in the program.

In the event of any deductions, she advised contacting the BISP helpline at 0800-26477 or visiting the nearest BISP tehsil office.

She further mentioned that BISP provides educational scholarships to the children of deserving families under the Benazir Taleemi Wazari Programme, with a special focus on scholarships for girls.

Additionally, a unique skill development program is being launched to enhance the socio-economic status of deserving women and their family members.

Later, Senator Rubina Khalid visited Tehsil Katlang in Mardan, where she addressed a public gathering.

She shared that, as per the instructions of President Asif Ali Zardari, the scope of the BISP is being expanded to include more deserving households.

She emphasized that the aim is for eligible women to receive their payments with dignity and respect, without any deductions. Senator Rubina Khalid also announced that BISP has introduced a new banking system to facilitate the payment of funds to deserving women.

## Advertisement of completed dev. projects for general public yet another imp. initiative towards good governance

Independent Report QUETTA: The government of Balochistan has advertised all completed development schemes for the general public in order to ensure transparency in the projects.

Needless to mention here that this is yet another important initiative of the provincial government according to the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

As per the official statement issued here by the Chief Minister secretary on Saturday, all the projects completed in all the divisions during the last

financial year.

It had been asked to the general public to identify the incomplete projects. The Chief Minister secretary has warned that prompt action would be taken on the public complaints.

According to the statement, action would be taken against those responsible for the incomplete and substandard work on the development projects.

For instance, all the projects completed in the Zhob division during last financial year were made public.

## Pak Army rescues seven mountaineers including 3 Russians

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Army successfully rescued seven mountaineers in Gilgit Baltistan from a height of 20,100 feet.

The climbers, who have been rescued in the operation, included three Russians and four Pakistanis. These mountaineers were in trouble due to high altitude sickness. On the rescue request, Pakistan Army acted promptly and climbers were rescued safely by Army helicopters.

The mountaineers have thanked Pakistan Army for the help.



QUETTA: Syed Habibullah Shah Chishti, Naeem Ahmed Madni, Maulana Mutfi Siddique Qadri, Pir Agha Majadadi, Maulana Mukhtar Ahmed Habibi, Allama Shahzad Attari, Maulana Ahmed Raza Qambrani, Maulana Qari Noor Muhammad and other Ulema attending meeting of Ittehad Ahle Sunnat in connection with participation of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW)

## Bilawal Bhutto calls for embracing Sufi teachings of love, tolerance

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his deep reverence for great Sufi saint Hazrat Ali Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA), on the occasion of his Urs.

In his message on Saturday, Bilawal highlighted the enduring relevance of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh's teachings. He stated, "His message of love, tolerance

and respect for humanity is eternal and serves as a beacon of hope for all."

He emphasized that the Sufi saint's teachings are particularly significant in the current times.

"The message of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) is the key to making society a haven of peace and tranquility," he said, urging people to reflect on the saint's life and values.

## Abbasi urges all institutions to stay within their constitutional limits

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Saturday that country could not move ahead unless constitution was followed in letter and spirit.

Speaking to a private TV channel, he said that it was a reality that we were not running our matters constitutionally, adding that dialogue was the only option used elsewhere in the world to sort out the differences.

## Loralai admin restores 52 non functional, retrieves 14 schools

QUETTA (APP): The District Administration Loralai has restored 52 non-functional schools during the current month to promote education and minimise the increasing number of out-of-school children in the area.

The District Administration Loralai has evacuated 14 occupied schools from the possession of local people during the ongoing drive to retrieve the public buildings established

for not performing duty.

Talking to APP, the Deputy Commissioner said that the district administration is committed to promoting education and taking all possible steps to open the non-functional schools besides taking strict action against the absent teachers.

He said that all possible measures would be taken for the improvement of schools in the area.

The salaries of absent teachers would be deducted



HUB: Shopkeepers and business community members block road as they are holding protest demonstration against the increasing theft incidents and the unrest law and order situation, at Asad Chowk.

## To assess damages caused by heavy rains Irrigation Dept. authorities conduct inspection of Orak river

Independent Report QUETTA: In accordance with the directives of Secretary Irrigation, Hafiz Abdul Majid, Chief Engineer Quetta Zone, Engineer Bashiruddin Tareen, along with Superintendent Engineer Qurban Ali Jatoti and SDO Engineer Ajmal Khan, conducted a detailed inspection of the Orak River in Quetta. The visit aimed to assess the extensive damage caused by recent heavy rains in Quetta and its surrounding areas.

Chief Engineer Tareen highlighted the severe impact of the floods on homes and agricultural lands along the Orak River. He noted significant damage to infrastructure, including roads, water pipelines, and bridges in the Hana Orak area. Tareen also warned of a high risk of further erosion in future floods and

stressed the urgency of preventive measures.

He commended the irrigation department's staff for their efforts despite limited resources and emphasized the need for reinforcing waterways, dams, and embankments in response to increased rainfall intensity due to climate change.

Tareen called for improved coordination among departments for systematic planning and suggested that the Government of Balochistan adopt strategic planning with development partners to strengthen irrigation structures.

Tareen further advocated for accelerated water storage efforts, including the construction of check dams to mitigate hill torrents and enhance groundwater recharge in the Quetta Valley.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary C&W Lal Jan Jaffar presiding over a meeting to review progress on developmental projects